






AMERICAN FOUNDATION  
FOR THE BLIND INC.





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2012 with funding from  
Lyrasis Members and Sloan Foundation



## HANDICAPS

*By the same Author*

A PIER AND A BAND

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHILDHOOD

FIGHTING FITZGERALD

(Martin Secker)

# HANDICAPS


## *SIX STUDIES*

BY

MARY MACCARTHY

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

LONDON ♦ NEW YORK ♦ TORONTO



LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4  
6 OLD COURT HOUSE STREET, CALCUTTA  
53 NICOL ROAD, BOMBAY  
36A MOUNT ROAD, MADRAS

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

114 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK  
221 EAST 20TH STREET, CHICAGO  
88 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

215 VICTORIA STREET, TORONTO

FIRST PUBLISHED 1936

HV 1947

F  
cop.1

*Printed in Great Britain*

DEDICATED TO  
CHEN



## PREFACE

THESE are not full biographies; the subjects are only described in one aspect—their relation to their infirmities. I have certainly had invalids in mind as among readers, but I would like just to say that it was not at all my intention to stir them up to try to perform feats of virtue to which they might be unequal. On the contrary, it should be remembered that few people could hope to overcome disability so marvellously as did Mr. Kavanagh, of whom the account may be read here; then Robert Louis Stevenson had an indomitable spirit; Professor Fawcett had an exceptionally good nerve. All these characters coming out of the past, express themselves each in the manner of their own time; but disaster to the human frame never goes out of fashion, and my hope certainly was that it might be an encouragement to read about some, who, in various ways, according to their powers, managed to make the best of a bad business. Their courage is for all time,





# CONTENTS

## SIX STUDIES

	PAGE
MARY LAMB	1765-1847 1
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN	1770-1827 19
ARTHUR MACMURROUGH KAVANAGH	1831-1889 59
✓ HENRY FAWCETT	1833-1884 105
W. E. HENLEY	1849-1903 129
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON	1850-1894 145



MARY LAMB

1765-1847



## MARY LAMB

1765-1847

*Mary Lamb under the care of her brother Charles*

IN the year 1795, before Charles Lamb had become famous for his essays, and Mary for her stories, when Charles was a young man of twenty and his sister, Mary, to whom he was devoted, close on thirty, the brother and sister were dwelling with their parents in Islington; the household consisting of their Father who was by now failing, their Mother who was an invalid, and an ancient aunt, a queer rough old woman, whom Charles used to call "the Witch Aunt". The parents were of humble origin but of good country stock. The father had been the excellent trusted servant of a Barrister who lived in Bachelor chambers in Grays Inn, but his master having died, he had retired on too small a pension for family needs, and in consequence the Islington home was poor and dingy, and it was not a cheerful household for the younger

members of the family. John, the eldest son did not find his people sympathetic, and went his own way. Mary and Charles, however, were making the best of the cramped life. Through the help of his father's master, Charles had been educated at Christ's Hospital, to which, blue-coated and yellow stockinged, he had gone every day from home. He chose for his chief school companion the poet Coleridge, whose friendship continued beyond schooldays, and with whom he corresponded. Charles, in the year we are writing of, had an appointment as a young clerk in the East India House, while Mary, having chosen to be a milliner, worked with her needle at home. In the evenings when Charles came home from his work, he helped her by playing cribbage with his childish old father, and often he had to keep the peace between his Mother and his Aunt.

Well, we have seen how they were circumstanced, when one winter's day, tragedy overtook that household all in a moment. Mary had been much worried and overworked with getting sewing done for customers up to time, and her mother had been watching her nervously and with

anxiety all the morning; for she had heard her daughter muttering nonsensically to herself on waking, and seen her growing more and more strange in her manner. When the hour of dinner drew near, the "Witch Aunt" busied herself as usual over the saucepans on the fire, while Mrs. Lamb sat down by the hearth and waited in acute suspense for Charles to come in, to advise them what they should do. They hardly dared to face the fact that Mary's reason was giving way.

"I will give you the outline of what has happened," wrote Lamb, a few days later, in the depths of distress to his friend Coleridge. "My poor dear dearest sister in a fit of insanity has been the death of her own Mother. I was at hand only in time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse."

It seems that while the family were preparing for dinner, Mary, quite out of her mind, in a menacing manner had pursued a little girl (her apprentice) round the room with a knife. Mary's Mother, rushing to intervene, was attacked and received a mortal wound.

"My poor father was slightly wounded and I am

left to take care of him and my Aunt," Lamb continues. "But thank God I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do."

According to his account, Charles "did not close his eyes in sleep that night," after the shock of the outbreak of his sister's insanity and the terrible murder in the house, but he appears to have been "wonderfully supported," and only broke down in an agony of grief when the next evening he beheld that the family parlour was crowded with well-meaning intruders sitting down to supper. At that, indignation ("the rage of grief and desolation") rushed up into his mind in an agony of emotion. "I found my way mechanically to the adjoining room and fell on my knees by the side of my mother's coffin. Tranquility returned, and it was the only violent emotion that mastered me and I think it did me good."

He was writing to his intimate friend Coleridge and he asked him to write in return "*as religious a letter as possible.*"

Poor Mary was in the Asylum slowly coming to her senses again, out of raving madness. The attack lasted a week, and she woke to a dreadful sense and vague recollection of what had passed, but so com-



pletely had the deed been one of insanity and oblivion, that when all was explained to her she was able to look upon her mother's end as having come about by a terrible accident. Awful as this catastrophe was to her mind, and apparently impressive to the end of life, she nevertheless was saved by her fine understanding from a morbid remorse. She knew she must distinguish between wilful murder and this desperate action performed while raving mad, and not even knowing whom she was attacking. After a time, while lying quietly in her bed, in possession of her faculties, a calm came over her as though it had been sent her as a gift, for "the spirit of my mother seems to descend upon me and bid me live," she said.

"I have no longer any bad terrifying dreams," she wrote to Charles, when she was beginning to be convalescent. "When I happen to awake with the poor mad people around me, and the nurse sleeping alongside, I have now no fear."

She wrote constantly to her brother who came to see her almost every day and who also constantly sent her letters, feeling very near and closely united to her in this trouble. Charles, ten years

her junior, had been Mary's charge from childhood, and now at the age of twenty-one he still found his sister completely sympathetic to him. She always had the power of cheering him when he was despondent. They saw eye to eye and she was an entirely worthy companion of his genius. He was absorbed in her troubles at this moment, and wanting to do everything he could for her. A kind friend of his former employer, now dead, had instantly sent old Mr. Lamb twenty pounds on hearing of the catastrophe so that Mary, instead of going to the public asylum, was at least able temporarily to remain in the private one to which she had been sent.

Charles wrote to Coleridge that "the good lady of the madhouse and her daughter love Mary, and are taken with her amazingly, and I know from her own mouth she loves them and longs to remain with *them* for the time being."

But now arose the horrible problem of expense that always must arise for the daily breadwinner at all moments and at whatever moment. Mary had murmured her fear that as they were poor she would have to be sent to Bedlam, the great public

asylum of those days; "that her elder brother John would have it so. Charles would not wish this, but would be obliged to go with the stream; that often as she had passed Bedlam she had thought it likely 'there may it be my fate to end my days'."

"She shall *not* go to the public asylum," emphatically said Charles.

From that moment he took the matter into his own hands. There was only £180 a year on which to support himself, his Father and an old servant. He would put aside nevertheless £50 a year for Mary.

"If we cannot live on £130 a year we ought to burn by slow fires, and I almost would, that Mary might not go into a public asylum." But owing to the distressing catastrophe of the murder, the magistrate only promised release of the patient on the express condition that a member of her family should undertake the responsibility for her safe keeping.

John, the elder brother, would do nothing in the matter, for it was his view that it would never be safe for Mary to be anywhere but in an asylum after what had occurred, and since there was no money,

it must be the public one of those days, Bedlam. He never offered to help, even with the old father. Having delivered himself of the opinion that life-long restraint must be Mary's fate, he took himself off and was very little seen by the family again. But Mary would certainly "have soon pined herself into permanent oblivion," Charles said, had the family abandoned her to the guardians of the public asylum, as the eldest brother had thought best. His mind was made up, and it was he, who at twenty-one, shouldered the whole burden.

With the help of friends, he succeeded in obtaining permission for Mary's release at a suitable date. Though recovered from insanity it was best that she should remain for a time in the private asylum to which she had been sent, and he would manage to pay the fees. He would live as frugally as he could with his father till the old man died, and after that Mary should come and live with him. He would take the risk.

At the same time he made the decision to stick close to his desk at the East India House all his life, dull and mechanical as the work of pricing tea and drugs and bales of indigo would be. The East India

Company, being a rich house, would steadily raise his salary, and though very poor at present, he would at long and last have £600 a year which, in prospect, seemed great wealth to him.

With his sister always on the edge of a precipice he could not bury himself in the books he loved, and risk living solely on the precarious earnings of literature which it had been in his mind to do.

His old father was now quite childish; remembered nothing of the tragedy, but was still keen on cribbage. When Lamb got in from his work at seven o'clock, hungry and weary, the old man would always get him to play cards, and again after supper. "If you won't play with me you might as well not come home at all," he said. "The argument was unanswerable," said Lamb, as he set to afresh.

Then the old man died, and presently Mary, with her mind perfectly restored for a time, came to live with Charles. "We are strong, for a time, as rocks," he wrote. "The wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs." He was right, for whenever Mary recovered, she recovered completely. There was no weakness or confusion, not a trace of insanity

remained. Hazlitt, the essayist, who was one of their friends, said he only met with one thoroughly reasonable woman; this was Mary Lamb. She had a very sweet character, much like her brother's; she also had the same great spirit of enjoyment, but a more placid temper than his, and was both practical and imaginative. Friends turned to her in all their troubles, for she was a most sympathetic adviser.

The brother and sister closely resembled one another. Both were under middle height. Both had dark and well-cut features. Mary had a charming voice and her manner was easy, homely, quiet and unaffected; not talking much. Her dress was always very plain, a stuff or silk gown made or worn in the simplest fashion.

Thomas Hood said that Lamb himself, though his fine head was set on "too spare a body and immaterial legs" was nevertheless "remarkable at a glance."

On Mary's coming back to normal life one of the things the brother and sister enjoyed together were evening strolls about the lighted streets of London. They had always managed even in the days of their

poverty to collect books, and Mary spoke of it being a great event when they bought, "by the light of a twinkling taper," from an old bookseller, the folio plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, for sixteen shillings. It seemed a colossal price, the purchase needing several days' consideration.

They sometimes went together to the shilling gallery of the theatres, to see Shakespeare or to see a new play. "Charles has such a simple and hearty sense of enjoyment. It is a pleasure to see him enjoy," wrote a friend.

Then just as they were happy and settled down together, trouble came again. Mary mercifully always had warnings of her fits of insanity, and now at this time, she felt an attack coming on and she sorrowfully and hastily prepared herself for leaving home. A friend, Charles Lloyd, speaks of meeting the pair, dissolved in tears, in the street. Lamb was taking his sister on his arm back to the private asylum in Hoxton. They were walking there quite bravely, without fuss; but both were crying.

But we must not give too tragic a picture of the Lambs. They were brave people, full of faith in life, who never turned bitter or arrogant because

of their troubles, and much of their life was happy.

"We are determined to snatch what happiness we can between the acts of our distressful drama," wrote Lamb to a friend.

Presently he was better off; he had by middle life the £600 a year he had hoped for, and for sixteen years Mary lived in rooms in the Temple with him, with intervals (some long, some short) when she had to go away, mad. By their fireside, and surrounded by their books, were written the "Essays of Elia" which brought Charles fame, and here Mary wrote "Mrs. Leicester's School," and together they wrote their "Tales from Shakespeare" which, though perhaps the least interesting of their works, have been translated into five languages. Mary wrote to her friend, Dorothy Wordsworth, describing their evenings at their not entirely congenial work on the "Tales". "We often sit writing at one table, like an old literary Darby and Joan. I taking snuff, and Charles groaning all the while and saying he can make *nothing* of it—and then he *does* make something of it."

In their rooms in the Temple they had long talks



with their friends, among them Coleridge, Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, and Hazlitt and Thomas Hood; and here they played whist with the many queer characters Lamb, for one reason or another, liked to invite into his house.

There was the old lady who could not bear *bad* whist. She liked "a bright fire, a clear hearth, and the rigour of the game". And there came the unkempt and unwashed young man to whom Charles across the card-table said, "If dirt were trumps, John, what a hand you'd have!" Lamb often wanted solitude and suffered from being over-whelmed by mediocre company. The brother and sister would firmly shut themselves up in their rooms when the stream of acquaintances became too much for them. "We intend a delicious quiet Xmas Day—dull and friendless," he wrote one Xmas eve.

It is impossible here to go into the life of Lamb—his genius, his weaknesses, his failings, the depths of his emotions.

Over and over again Mary lost her reason, but in the intervals of two years, or three, or one, she always shared his life. It was Lamb who said of

Mary, "Of all the people I ever saw in the world my poor sister was most thoroughly devoid of the least tincture of selfishness," and it must not be supposed that Mary tried to keep Charles to herself. She was, indeed, anxious for him to marry, and shared his disappointment when the actress Fanny Kelly, ("with her divine plain face") refused him. Mary also sent Charles at one time to live away from her, in lodgings by himself, thinking it would be better for him; but he could not bear the solitude, and came back.

Had Mary been all this while in Bedlam, how many things would she not have been shut away from, that Charles himself enumerated as heavenly on this earth?

"Sun and sky and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and greenness of fields; the cheerful glass, and candlelight and fireside conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests and irony itself."

But the battle was no light one, and alas! "Mary has gone off to be ill again" was once more the inevitable news in one of the latest of Lamb's terribly despondent letters, and he says he feels completely shipwrecked.

"You must go first, Mary," Charles had said, speaking of death and remembering she was ten years older.

"Yes, I must go first," Mary had said.

But it was Lamb who died in 1834, ten years before his sister, in his sixtieth year.

On realizing that he was gone from her, Mary is said to have rushed into the street asking strangers wildly for her brother, and then the waters of oblivion closed over her once more for a time.

She is said to have suffered from uncongenial attendants in old age. But at last she was happy with a well-chosen nurse, whose nephew remembers seeing little old Miss Lamb in her white frilled cap moving slowly down a long path in a narrow shady garden. It was after sunset and bats were flitting about; she was in her right mind at the time, and she gave him snuff from her snuff-box.

When she passed at last away, at the age of eighty-two, there was no sadness at the funeral; only a sense of peace in the churchyard, after her burial by the side of her brother. One of their friends who was present wrote afterwards, "We all

#### HANDICAPS

talked with warm affection of dear Mary Lamb, and of her brother Charles, of all the men of genius I ever knew, the one most intensely and universally to be loved."

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

1770-1827



## LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

*1770-1827*

**I**HAD been for a long day's ramble in the country with Beethoven," wrote Ries, the violinist, who was one of his pupils, describing a visit to the composer in the summer of the year 1795 in a village not far from Vienna. Beethoven, it seems, had come away from the town to work in peace, and here in an upper apartment large enough to take a grand piano, with windows looking out upon a rushing stream, he had settled down to practise and compose.

"He had been humming to himself the whole way home and almost howling," continued Ries. "He had just thought of a subject for the last movement of a Sonata in G. On getting back to his room he rushed up to the piano, without taking off his hat, and stormed over the keys for the next half-hour until the finale was almost in shape.

It was by then nine o'clock and getting dark.

"I cannot give you a lesson to-day. I must work," he said, abstractedly and gruffly as he jumped up, turned to pen, ink, music paper, and settled down to composition for the rest of the night; and "all the next day it seemed as if the whole house was on fire with the magic feats of his spirit."

Beethoven was at that time in his twenty-sixth year, and had already become known in Vienna as a great pianist, but he had only just begun to win fame as a composer.

Czerny, who was another pupil of Beethoven's, describes being taken to visit him in Vienna for the first time when he himself was ten years old.

Beethoven was still under twenty-six, at the time living in poor circumstances, absorbed in composition and entirely given up to music. "We mounted five or six storeys high, and reaching the composer's apartments were announced by an untidy servant and admitted to a desolate room strewn with papers, books, and garments. Standing by the piano were a violinist and conductor from the Vienna Theatre and four other musicians, come to try over music for a concert." To little Czerny's surprise Beethoven looked like Robinson Crusoe,



for the thickset short being who came forward, was dressed in a suit of rough grey fur, had a beard of some days' growth, and a great ruffled shock of black hair. He was sallow and slightly pock-marked, had a massive brow overhanging dark piercing eyes, and he had a grave, sad, rather sulky look.

Beethoven, who could be very gruff and disagreeable if interrupted at work, fortunately was in a kindly mood that day and gave the little boy and his father a genial welcome. Then he turned away from them to the musicians round the piano, took the score they had brought, and sitting down to the piano, played it at sight with every minute detail and the finest nuances of expression. Then for the young boy who was to be his pupil, he played some Bach, "the immortal god of harmony" as he called that composer. Finally he played one of his own sonatas with passion and prodigious strength, filling the room with a flow of exquisite music.

"I shall never get over it. The devil is in the fellow," said one of the musicians, quite overcome by the playing, as the whole party trooped away down the wooden staircase after their visit to the genius.

Ludwig van Beethoven who lived nearly all his life in Vienna had been born in the year 1770 at Bonn, on the Rhine. His mother was the daughter of a Viennese chef; his father was a tenor singer in the choir of the Roman Catholic Chapel, and, also, at the little Imperial Theatre, at Bonn. He had two brothers younger than himself. His grandfather, Johann van Beethoven, had come to Germany from Flanders; thus the composer (who was always a Republican) came of small bourgeois Belgian stock on the paternal side, and by his mother was a man of the German "volk". The grandfather had been a fine musician, and Beethoven always spoke of him as "very lovable" and "a man of honour".

Of his father his chief remembrance was of the humiliation of seeing him stumble tipsily across the market-place, and having to help him home over the cobbles of the old street where they lived; then of his mother's efforts to help her husband from losing his place in the Imperial Choir through drink; and finally of this happening after her early death.

The family lived in an atmosphere of making music, it might be said, "for dear life"; for their liv-

ing depended on it in close competition with other professional musicians attached to the court of Bonn under the patronage of the Elector of Cologne. Strains could be heard floating out from the window of the Beethovens' dwelling at all hours of the day, and sometimes at night. Little Beethoven was often made to jump out of bed to play the piano or the violin in his nightgown, to make a third with his father and a musical friend when they were in need of strenuous practising for Church or theatre. By seven years old he had already played the piano in public; by fourteen he had become a member of the Court Orchestra at Bonn, as a second violinist. At a Franciscan Monastery in the mountains above the town he had begun to learn to play the organ with one of the monks, at eleven years old; and by fourteen he was playing in the Electoral Chapel at Mass on Weekdays and at Vespers; and by the age of sixteen he was so competent a musician that he was given the post of Court organist with a small salary. He was a queer clumsy heavy boy; desperately absent-minded, but not from any feeble lack of attention, merely because he was so concentrated and absorbed in music and musical composition.

Where music was concerned there was no vagueness at all; but rapt concentration. His father is spoken of as having been a slave-driver, but Beethoven, as a matter of fact, said he was glad of the high standard of work he was given by this parent who was himself so feckless.

All his life Beethoven looked back on Bonn as having been a most charming place to have lived in as a child, though it cannot be said that his own childhood was very happy. He loved the rapid Rhine flowing silently and deliciously past its gardens and orchards; and also the hazy "Seven Mountains" that rose behind the town with the famous old ruined castles and vineyards on their slopes.

Bonn was so quiet a place in the late eighteenth century that grass grew in many of the streets; but artistically it was quite alive, for the Elector of Cologne lived in a small palace in the town for most of the year round. (He was the brother of Queen Marie Antoinette, who was to be guillotined in the year 1793.) Like all German princes of the eighteenth century he made it one of his duties to give intelligent patronage to music, and the Electoral Court supported the little Theatre of Bonn. It was

there Beethoven saw the plays of Schiller, Goethe and Shakespeare, and by the age of seventeen, with great enjoyment, he was playing the viola in the orchestra in the performances of Gluck's "Alceste" and "Orpheus", and in Mozart's "Figaro".

The opera singers, actors, and orchestral musicians made up a little world of their own at Bonn; full of hard work; love comedies and tragedies; professional jealousy, and often noisy rows; the women singers trilling at rehearsals most of the day and performing at night, yet also cooking, making their dresses, shopping in the market; the men of the theatre, large, stout, wearing great wideawake hats, and cloaks, quenching their thirst after long rehearsals and performances with a colossal amount of beer; and smoking "meer-schaum" pipes, in gardens by the rushing Rhine.

Beethoven, aged seventeen, in the year 1787, was looked upon as the most promising member of this musical world, with his wonderful improvisation at the piano, his thorough understanding of all orchestral music and every instrument, and his absorption in Mozart and Bach.

"All the superior performers in the orchestra are

his admirers. They are all ears when he plays, but the man himself is exceedingly modest" wrote Count Waldstein, who had decided to send young Beethoven to Vienna for a time, to see the composer Haydn, and to hear music and have lessons in harmony.

The poor boy, however, had no sooner settled down to work in Vienna when the illness of his mother sent him hurrying back to Bonn.

"The longing to see my sick mother helped me to overcome the greatest difficulties" (in the matter of money). "I found her in the most deplorable state of health; she was in consumption and after unheard of sufferings died seven weeks ago. She was such a good loving mother to me and my best friend. To whom shall I ever say the word 'Mother' now?" he wrote to a doctor in Vienna in a letter full of grief. In the same small dwelling, a few months later, died his little sister of two years old. The strain of the family sorrows had been too much for his father. Every night now he drowned his troubles in wine, and to his humiliation had been asked to retire from his post as a singer, receiving a pension on which he himself alone could

just live. All the burden of the education of the two brothers fell on Ludwig. He was intensely conscientious. For three years he bravely managed to support himself and the two brothers by his playing of the viola in the Court Theatre Orchestra, and the organ in the Imperial Chapel, and by giving pianoforte lessons in Bonn. His days were very full. He detested teaching and was far too impatient for the work; but he had at least two interesting piano pupils, Stephen and Eleanor von Breuning, two young members of an artistic family who lived in Bonn.

"We began by pitying this rather uncouth young man, Mamma and I," said Eleanor von Breuning, "until we heard him play, and talk of music; then we worshipped his genius." They remained his lifelong friends, and his sorrows and anxieties would be forgotten for a time when staying with this very human and charming family who understood him. He read all the books in their house, played quartettes and made a great deal of music with them, he also often went with them for holidays to their country house.

At last by the time Beethoven was twenty-two,

his young brothers had been safely got out into the world; one as an apothecary, the other as a musician, and the von Breunings were determined that Ludwig should now be free to go to Vienna again to study under Haydn. They used their influence to this end, and the Elector decided that a pension of sixty pounds should be paid to this brilliant young member of the Bonn orchestra for two years' study, under Haydn.

"Through unintermitting work, receive the spirit of Mozart at Haydn's hands," wrote the German Court Chamberlain, announcing the good news to Beethoven in a pompous but kindly letter, also giving him useful introductions. Beethoven with alacrity said good-bye to his dingy lodging, to the Bonn orchestra and its life which he had outgrown; more wistfully good-bye to "Unser Vater Rhein", and to the mountains; to his brothers, and the von Breunings; and one autumn morning set out in a stage-coach for Austria. It was the year 1793.

"Wig-maker, coffee, coat, writing materials, desk for piano, hire of piano, 7 gulden for a lodging" were the first entries in a new note-book on arrival in Vienna, showing that a practical begin-



ning was to be made, by going on a morning's shopping, before work, in the capital.

The first introduction he used after he had settled down to his new life was to Herr Zemskall, secretary to the Emperor of Austria. Zemskall at first intended to quickly dismiss the provincial "dark, cross-looking musician", who had come to play to him in the middle of a busy morning, but he was soon so deeply interested in Beethoven's extempore playing of Bach, Mozart, and some of his own compositions, that he kept him at the piano for a long time. Then he invited him to the Quartette playing he had every Sunday in his own rooms in the Palace, and after that it was not long before the highly critical musical audiences of Vienna had accepted Beethoven as a genius. In another year's time no other artist approached him in the heights on which he stood as a pianist.

"Seated at the instrument, with square shoulders, rough black hair and massive brow, he moved but little while playing; and there was a rapt sphinx-like calm upon his set features which was generally to be noticed when he was lost in abstraction," said his pupil, Ries, describing the musician playing Handel, Bach, Glück and Palestrina.

"His improvising was the most extraordinary thing that could be heard, especially when he was in a good humour and excited. The wealth of ideas which crowded on him, the caprices to which he lent himself, the variety of handling, the difficulties which offered themselves or were introduced by him, were unsurpassed. He would sometimes improvise for two hours together during which time there was not a single bar that was faulty or wanted originality."

After such improvisations Beethoven would often break out into a loud ringing merry laugh, as though rejoicing in the delight of music; and in those first days of youthful recognition in Vienna, he is described as being "cheerful and ready for a jest; witty and satirical but not yet bitter and sarcastic".

In the early twenties, he was already often in love; but not yet so as to be seriously disturbed. Only just as his opening the house door on a starlight night might suggest the scherzo for a symphony; or the note of a bird, heard in a wood, suggest a phrase for a trio, so in the same way, the poetic sight of a lovely young girl (perhaps crossing

a street flashing in the sunshine and wind, or having attracted him during a short journey in a coach) would at once inspire him. She would be borne away into the region of "Tones", sublimated into a sonata! Perhaps all the more thoroughly in that he worked so hard at the music; for that which appears the most spontaneous, grew slowly and carefully with him always.

Two years of work now passed away, and then in 1795 Beethoven went on a musical tour to Dresden and other cities, and lastly to Berlin.

At the end of that time he appears to have thoroughly realized how great was his power, for in a note-book on the return journey to Vienna he wrote: "Take courage. Spite of all physical shortcomings, my mind shall rule. I have reached my twenty-fifth year and must now be *all* that I *can* be. Nothing must be left undone."

He had no petty conceit, but of his genius he was entirely and quite simply sure. Never to exploit it for his own vain ends; and to sacrifice everything else in life to it was his determination.

By his twenty-fifth year he had already composed three hundred works. He hardly left off working,

in Vienna and the surrounding country, again for the rest of his life, and from this time forward it may be said that the only significant life of Beethoven was the life of Composition.

He was a stupendous worker. He was to die at the age of fifty-six, yet his complete works are in thirty-eight volumes, and a scholarly musician would need a full year merely to gain a superficial knowledge of the music.

When composing, Beethoven showed the utmost power of wrapt concentration; the utmost power at the pianoforte whilst forging his work, and finally in spite of his impatient nature, the utmost patience in the last irksome task of getting the music written down and ready to present to his orchestra; resulting for the world in the glorious performance of symphonies, sonatas, masses, oratorios, concertos, his opera "Fidelio", and finally in the works which he himself most valued of all his music,—his string Quartettes. He made his compositions stand every kind of test; playing them over and over again alone, and also to others, in different moods. For weeks together he often worked night and day, allowing nothing to distract him.

When he was completing "Fidelio", an early morning caller wrote: "Beethoven was in bed, fast asleep, a goblet of wine and a rusk at his side. Scattered about the bed and upon the floor were sheets upon sheets of MSS. It was the overture. A burnt-out candle showed he had worked far into the night." And then again a few mornings later, Beethoven was sitting up in bed, "having worked since Dawn".

When wrapped in composition he was generally physically unconscious of what he was doing. He would go like a somnambulist from his piano to his washstand and pour jugs of water over his hands and arms; splashing, washing, and splashing over and over again, and on and on, as though it soothed him and kept his nerves quiet. Sometimes after hours of composition he was so excited that he seemed unable to stop the flow of musical thought, and yet to be unable to stand any more of it. Then he would pour his jug of water over his head to cool his brain. Then at last, quieted down, he would shamle off out of doors for a walk on the ram-parts of the town.

We have pictured him at work in Vienna, but

as a matter of fact he was much more often to be found in the country when composing, as we have seen him with the musician Ries, coming in at dusk, making for his piano, humming to himself.

In the spring of 1812 he was working at his oratorio, "Christ on the Mount of Olives", at Hetzendorf near Vienna, passionately enjoying being in the country again; for all his life nature filled him with rapture. "A great work troubles me immensely at the outset," he said, speaking of this oratorio. "Sometimes I sit and think and get all settled, but it won't come on to paper; but after a time it comes."

Every day at Hetzendorf, in the first morning freshness, he set out for a favourite wood, taking with him the thick notebook, ruled for music, which he always carried in his capacious pocket. Leaning against a tree, he liked to sit listening to birds, watching ants, enjoying the shape of a passing cloud, then concentrating his thoughts and finding his theme. Sometimes between the lines of music in the notebooks, he scribbled, half absently, prayers and ejaculations! One of these in German verse, translated, runs: "Al-

mighty! in woods I am happy—happy in woods. God, what splendour! In these forests—in these hills. It is the calm! The calm to serve you!”

He was known to many contemporaries as an unresigned, rebellious, chafing, sarcastic spirit, and yet he often expressed himself most humbly in these simple written prayers. At the age of thirty-six he wrote secretly of his “proud heart brought low by many chastisements”. “But one thing I ask of Thee, my God, not to cease Thy work in my improvement. Let me tend towards Thee, no matter by what means, and be fruitful in good works.”

At the end of the spring of 1802 the “Christ on the Mount of Olives” was finished and Beethoven came back to Vienna with his MSS. The performance of the oratorio had been arranged for, and he was now shut up with two copyists for some days in his lodgings, at work from morning till night, putting the last finishing touches. The orchestra had been eagerly awaiting the music; at last the parts were distributed, rehearsing begun.

On the morning of the last rehearsal, Beethoven began working at 5 a.m. “on the bassoons”, the composition, here, not having quite satisfied him.

Already at eight that morning, in the Vienna Theatre, the drums, clarinets, fiddles, and the rest of the brass and wood of all shapes, began sounding discordantly with the usual confusion of the musicians' tuning up. Then Beethoven himself, bringing with him the belated bassoon parts, rushed into the theatre to conduct. It was a trying rehearsal, and went on till four in the afternoon with only a short interval for a picnic for the famished members of the orchestra, who fell to on sausages and beer all amongst their instruments; and then the scraping of their fiddles promptly began again.

Beethoven lost his temper several times. First with the copyists, "Every mark of expression might as well be erased from the score!" he shouted. Then with the instruments, and the musicians, and last with his patron, Prince Lobkowitz, who was called an ass for daring to suggest that the absence of one contraflaggotist need not wreck the whole oratorio. By the evening the composer was nervous about his work. ("I made the music for our Lord too dramatic," he said afterwards, "I wish I could have changed it.")

Strung up to concert pitch, however, he re-



appeared calm, for the performance itself; shaved, and dressed in a bottle-green coat and clean stock. He mounted to the conductor's desk, dignified, concentrated. Then, sure enough, the performance went magnificently. It was the year 1802 and he was in his thirty-second year. Vienna had by now accepted Beethoven as a genius, and the most critical audiences in Europe were at the feet of "The founder of Musical Romance," as he was called. He himself was not satisfied with the oratorio "Christ on the Mount of Olives". Later in life, of all his compositions, it was his symphonies and string quartettes that satisfied him most.

"My kingdom is in the air," he was wont to say to console himself when illness and temperamental troubles and the disappointments of love, and drab and dingy cares crowded upon him.

The trivial items in his list for shopping, that he made in 1793 on getting to Vienna, might be said to have been prophetic of the practical difficulties that were going to beset him throughout his musical career in that city—namely, "wig-maker, coffee, coat, shoes, writing materials, hire of piano, hire of lodgings."

"*Wig-maker*," for instance, represented dressing for the soirées of his Viennese patrons; the material oppressiveness that weighed on him, in the grand and heated salons; and the eating off gold plate, to the accompaniment of shouted conversation; the playing of music to order, and everything that Beethoven included in the phrase, "the old Imperial style". Uncouth, outspoken, proud, bourgeois, and in politics a Republican, he did not make a good courtier. "It is very pleasant to have to do with the aristocracy, but there must be no servility on any account, or one's position is intolerable," he wrote.

"*Coffee*" he made himself, in the early morning, counting out sixty beans; but the quiet hour of the simple "Frühstück" which he so enjoyed when composing in country seclusion, was generally spoilt in Vienna by agitation over his bills, and plans, and engagements; and arrangements with publishers and conductors, and even lawyers. He was utterly unpractical in the affairs of this world, and he would get into a panic lest these would overwhelm him and waste the strength that he was determined should only be dedicated to music.

"Coat" represented his daily dressing, which he seemed to find difficult to get done at all. As often as not when he shaved, he cut himself in absence of mind; then his coat itself was often ragged, more from the impossibility of finding time and inclination to get to the tailors than from actual poverty.

For "Shoes" he would search everywhere, and not find, or "my only pair was at the cobblers. I had none to go out in" was the history of the day to a friend, and then he meekly missed an appointment and stopped in till the shoes came back.

For the "*Writing Materials*" item, his eighteenth-century pens were generally unmended, to his exasperation; and he would run out of music paper just as inspiration flowed. Then the misprints of his copyists and also of the publishers of those days were his despair. Music copying was expensive and the whole of the musical life seemed to spell incessant money worry instead of riches. "Writing materials" also suggest his correspondence. Beethoven should not be judged by his rambling letters, for as he himself said, he never could express himself as he wanted to in human language, and he was bored with letter writing. All his expression went

straight into music, and he certainly would never have wished to have his correspondence published.

As for the item "*Lodgings*," these were abandoned thirty times in thirty-two years of life in Vienna. Warning to three cooks in succession is the history of six months of the year 1810. The last of these failures had been approved at first, and Beethoven had called her his "fast-sailing frigate" because she had carried his messages quickly; but soon she had burnt an omelette, and now some MSS. pages of composition—the Kyrie of a Mass—searched for everywhere, as usual, amid a confusion of books, scores, and papers, had this time actually been found in her kitchen, crumpled up among the saucepans.

She recounted afterwards that the master "had flown into a great fury." One can picture him, standing by his two grand pianos, while she faced his angry piercing eyes.

It is well known how violent were his feelings when he heard Napoleon had taken the title of "*Emperor* of the French". He was finishing his "Heroic Symphony", romantically believing that Napoleon's scheme was to remodel France on the pattern of Plato's Republic, and that Napoleon

genuinely stood for Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. In his disappointment with "the new tyrant" he passionately tore away his page of dedication, and called his work only "The Heroic Symphony", "to celebrate the *memory* of a great man."

"I flare up worse than others do," he said sadly of his bursts of contemptuous wrath. Sir Donald Tovey (the greatest exponent of his music) in an article on the symphonies and quartettes, says that Beethoven was passionately affectionate; but with an utterly simple nature and a character of enormous vigour, he could not understand a human being who was not possessed by the wish to live by the very highest æsthetic and moral idealism. Unfortunately, as life went on, his dignity became more and more susceptible to supposed insults and slights, that very common symptom of nervous strain in highly strung vain human beings, frustrated in the life they desire, or compelled to lead lonely lives by Fate. He was also often exhausted by the long-sustained hours at composition, and at such times in the friction of everyday life, became utterly overwrought and uncontrolled in his temper.

His quarrels with his relations and friends and his nephew, invariably originating from his own bitter reproaches, or arbitrary prescriptions for their better behaviour, are not interesting; they are merely depressing.

By the summer of 1801, after years of unceasing work, Beethoven had come to feel that his genius was a mighty force using him as a channel, or servant. To forget his "Kingdom of the Air," and to give sketchy accounts of his drab earthly existence, instances of his uncouthness and weaknesses and his "touchiness", and to see these incomplete details as the "Life" of this genius, whose whole being was expressed in music, can only be said to be as misleading as if one took someone who had never before seen the sea, down to a shore with the tide far out; and showing them a jelly fish, a crab shell, an old tin and a cast-up boot, said, "This is the ocean"! The crash of the breakers must surely be waited for, covering all this debris with fresh wild sea foam; and looking towards the horizon, mountainous wave after wave rolling in must be beheld—to "have seen the sea".

But we must now describe, a little belatedly, the

great infirmity that was to spoil much of Beethoven's own pleasure in existence, but over which he managed to triumph for the sake of art. In 1801, at the age of thirty-one, to his greatest friend, Wegeler, he wrote: "You can hardly believe how dreary my life has become. For two years now I have been avoiding all social gatherings because I cannot bring myself to say to people, 'I am *deaf*'. "Had I any other profession it would be easier, but it is in the profession of a musician that it is so intolerable; for how am I to admit infirmity in the *one* sense which should have been more perfect in me than in others? a sense which I once possessed in *highest* perfection, a perfection such as few surely in my profession have possessed?

"In the theatre I now have to get very close to the orchestra in order to understand the actors. If I am a little distant I do not hear the tones of the instruments, or the singers, and if I am but a little farther away, I simply do not hear them at all. Heaven knows what will happen to me!" He implores his friend to tell no one; and he continues to play in public, and to conduct his compositions for a little while longer.

Beethoven knew, as all composers know, that his actual composing would be unaffected by physical deafness; and the reading of the scores of classical music to a great musician is certainly a greater pleasure than hearing an imperfect orchestra perform those works; nevertheless his deafness, as can be imagined, caused his whole musical life to be incomplete, in countless ways; the spontaneous hearing of musical sound being indispensable to it; and the relations with performers requiring the faculty of hearing; but the main trouble was the actual difficulty of conducting and rehearsing his orchestra. That was insuperable.

After the age of thirty-two the defect was always with him, baulking him at all hours. He could not get away from his deafness or forget it in the intensely full and specialised musical life he lived; "sound", the very object of that life. Between the ages of thirty and thirty-two, when he was getting worse, the fact haunted him like a spectre that in a few years' time, he, who was a musical genius, must simply become stupid towards external sounds of music. He was already beginning not to be able to enjoy hearing his be-



loved Handel, Bach, and Mozart, of whom he spoke with unending worship; would presently not be able to enjoy his powers as a conductor conducting a splendid orchestra; and soon would never have the satisfaction of hearing his own works performed. Thus Beethoven passed through a terrible time of depression between the years 1801 and 1802.

"Oh, if I were rid of this affliction, I could embrace the world!" he wrote to a friend.

"My mental powers have been developing steadily. Day by day I am approaching the goal which I apprehended but cannot describe in words. I will take fate by the throat! It shall not wholly overcome me! Oh! It is so beautiful to live—to live a thousand times! I feel I am not made for a quiet life!"

But he was, in fact, going through a double crisis when he wrote thus of his feelings, for he had fallen in love at this time with a very fascinating young girl, a Countess Guicardi, of a Viennese family. He had composed the "Moonlight" Sonata for her, and there had been exciting passages of love for quite a year; but disappointment and disillusionment followed. The Gräfin "sighed as a lover but obeyed as a daughter". She tore herself

from this romance, and married at her father's command, an aristocrat of her own fashionable world.

"If I had thrown away my life strength into such an existence, should I have been better or nobler?" it must be said was Beethoven's comment later—but for the time being, the complete break with the Countess Guicardi, combined with the knowledge that his sense of hearing was rapidly deteriorating, almost shattered him.

Beethoven's ideal of love was undying attachment, bringing peace and faithful marriage; and for the rest, calm for the undisturbed pursuit of Art. But though several times in love again in the course of life, both his deafness and his genius made it his fate to be lonely and to die unmarried. "Oh, terrible condition which forbids that longing for domestic life but fails to suppress it!" he exclaims. "For yourself there can be no happiness but that which you can find in yourself and your art. O God, give me strength to conquer myself."

In this crisis of the year 1802 he plunged into work, and produced the Second Symphony in D Major. "The Strong Man," "the Man of Power"

that had been his ideal, he now thought less of. *Humility, sacrifice*, he now accepted as the necessity of a decent life on earth.

His friends probably did not know the whole history of his suffering at this time, for he was extremely reserved about his love affairs, but of the deafness itself, a friend of Beethoven's, Von Breuning, wrote to Dr. Wegeler: "Alas, you cannot imagine what a terrible effect the general loss of hearing has had upon him. Think what such a misfortune is to one of his uncontrollably impatient temperament! Intercourse with him has become a considerable strain, and he feels this terribly."

After 1804, Beethoven made no further efforts at concealment of his affliction. A fresh specialist he consulted commanded him to stay in the country and spare his hearing as much as he possibly could, and in Heiligenstadt he settled down for a time to solitude and composition.

At this time he wrote: "There is no possibility of a good exchange of thought now, or any recreation to be got out of mingling with society. I just must live like an exile. 'Patience' it is said I must now choose for my guide. 'Oh, it is not easy to become

a philosopher.' Less easy for an artist than anyone else!"

Some years afterwards, Spohr, referring to Beethoven's deafness in a letter said: "He received me with uncommon kindness. But it was sorry work making him hear. We were in a restaurant and I had to shout so that one could have been heard three rooms away"; and then later he describes Beethoven playing the piano part of his trio, Op. 97. "It was no enjoyment whatever; so loud did he play when 'Forte' was demanded that the strings vibrated. When he was to play 'piano' he touched the keys so lightly that no sound came, and one lost the thread. I felt deeply moved by his hard fate; and Beethoven's melancholy is no longer an astonishment to me. It is a terrible calamity to be deaf in any case; but in that of a musician, it may easily bring him to despair."

Beethoven struggled in the matter of taking a public part in the life of music in Vienna for quite a long time, but from his forty-sixth year onward he was unable to do this. Even as late as 1822, however, he attended all the rehearsals of his opera "Fidelio" which was given in that year, and

so immersed was he in the interest of his work that at the last rehearsal he took the bâton from the conductor and got up, instinctively, on to the platform to conduct.

"But from the beginning of the duet in the first act, it was clear that he heard nothing of what was going on, on the stage," wrote the musician Schindler in an account to a friend. "The chorus became confused. The usual director of the orchestra, who stood at his side, proposed a pause of rest, without giving the reason, and presently the same thing began again with the same confusion. The impossibility of continuing under the conducting of Beethoven was evident. But how make him see it? for no one had the heart to say, 'Get down from the desk—you poor unfortunate man. You must give it up.'"

Beethoven, anxious and agitated, turned to the right and left, trying to read in the faces of the performers what was actually the matter; but on all sides silence. "Suddenly he called me," Schindler continues, "gave me his notebook and asked me to write in it. I wrote, 'I beg you not to go on. I will tell you why, at home.'"

“With a bound he jumped down to the ground. ‘Let us go quickly,’ he cried, and ran home all the way, and when he got there fell on to the divan; covering his face with his hands. He never spoke during the meal we presently took together. He looked exhausted and utterly depressed and I have never known anything like that fatal November day. He had been smitten to the heart, and to the day of his death he lived under the impression of that failure.”

“Beethoven was always intensely appreciative of contemporary master musicians, but from the year 1816, when he was forty-six, onwards, he had to shun the acquaintance of artists he would really have liked to consort with, the strain of deafness being too irksome to make communication worth while. From that time forth, he became almost completely solitary.

A happy day, however, was that of the 9th May, 1824, when a great musical audience was assembled in Vienna for the enjoyment of a new work by Beethoven, to be performed by a fine orchestra and carefully chosen choir.

The work was the Ninth Symphony.

All through the performance, hearing nothing of the rolling waves of sound himself, Beethoven stood just by the conductor's platform, looking up at the performers, watching them with intentness, while the work was conducted by another hand. There was a great burst of applause at the end; and a stirring and rising, the whole hall resounding with clapping. But the composer remained still motionless and abstracted, thinking of his composition, and still turned towards the performers. The chief soprano then ran down to him amid the din, took him by the hand and pulled him up on to the platform. There she turned him round to the audience to behold the faces of the excited listeners who were standing up, waving their hats, and still applauding.

All realized then that for the almost stone-deaf composer, himself, it had been a silent performance. A great wave of compassionate sympathy went out to him.

He had scribbled in one of his note-books some years before, "O Providence! Let but one day of pure joy break for me! It is so long since I have been a stranger to pure joy"; and now the success,

amongst the musical elect, of this great creation was a tremendous pleasure and cause of thankfulness to him. On this joyful day of the performance of the Ninth Symphony, he could feel how well he had come out of his conflict over suicide some years before. When desperately unhappy, "a little more and I might have ended my life," he had written. "My art however held me back. It seemed impossible to leave this world until I had produced *all* that lies within me."

And now, "God forbid that this man should ever die," his musical admirers seemed to be saying, surely, in their thundering applause of the Ninth Symphony, and in their enthusiastic conviction of the immortality of Beethoven's music; "There shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground," was their romantic sentiment, "for he hath wrought with God this day."

He remained serene and happy for some time after. He had plans for composing something on the theme of Saul and David; this did not come about, but the string quartettes followed, and these absorbed him for the rest of his days.

He lived now most of the time in the country



near Vienna. Here, completely deaf, and shut off from any spontaneous human intercourse, he immersed himself in composition. Nature, apart from this, was his greatest pleasure in life. Full of sound, he would go stumbling over ploughed fields, humming to himself, and into the woods, waving his arms, stamping, stopping a little while, then on, forgetful of himself, and of all else save music. But already by his fifty-sixth year the great Beethoven was worn out; he was dying. His heart was tired, there were symptoms of dropsy with internal complications; he felt very ill; and in the winter of 1826 went back to his own lodgings in the town to be near his doctor. According to Monsieur Romain Rolland, a friend and fellow-musician described last seeing Beethoven in a tavern in Vienna, sitting all alone in a corner, smoking his long pipe. His eyes were shut, as though he were too ill to bear the light, and needed soothing. When he looked up at last, he spoke to him. Beethoven sighed heavily, and wearily pulled out his notebook and pencil. The look he gave his friend was strange and wild, "the look of King Lear" the friend said.

His last illness lasted three months. He had much pain and was very patient. All the fury had left him. Thoughtful for his oldest friend, Dr. Wegeler in Bonn, he wrote him a tender letter of affectionate farewell. A present of the complete works of Handel came as a distraction; he read the score all day, when not too ill. England had always been very appreciative of Beethoven, and he himself was a great admirer of the English, but had never managed to go, himself, to London. Some admirers now, members of a London Symphony Society, sent him £100 in appreciation of his works performed in England—and the arrival of this gift gave him pleasure and relieved the financial strain of his last illness.

The 26th March, 1827, was a grey cold day in Vienna. His brother's wife and a young musician stayed in the room where Beethoven lay dying, and they saw to the nursing.

"Thank you, Father. You have brought me comfort," he said to the Priest who had brought him the last sacrament.

Snow fell in the afternoon, and there was one of those swift thunderstorms that occur incongru-

ously sometimes, in the midst of early spring cold. A sense of the storm reached him—he raised himself for one moment from his pillows—shuddered—and was gone; “Stretched no more upon the rack of this tough world,” having lived just long enough to make that world the heir to a great treasury of music.



ARTHUR MACMURROUGH KAVANAGH

1831-1889



## ARTHUR MACMURROUGH KAVANAGH\*

1831-1889

**B**ORRIS HOUSE, a grey stone manor by the River Barrow in County Carlow has been the home of the Kavanaghs ever since 1570. The family possess the charter horn, and traces its descent directly from the old Kings of Leinster who up to the sixteenth century defied their English conquerors all about the mountainous country that the many windows of Borris overlook. The building of Borris House in 1570 (Elizabethan, solid, strong and staid), betokened, however, the establishment of a long line of Irish landlords; conquered princes, remaining on the spot; for loyalty to England had followed the final total defeat of Leinster, and in the last years of the sixteenth century, Unionism became the family tradition that has lasted to the present day.

Captain Kavanagh, the father of Arthur MacMurrough Kavanagh, was a member of the Union Parliament, in the reign of William IV. He had

\*See Bibliographical Note.

married firstly Lady Elizabeth Butler, daughter of the 17th Lord Ormonde (the couple had only one son who died; but nine daughters, six of whom remained spinsters). After the death of Lady Elizabeth, late in life, the Captain married Lady Harriet Le Poer Trench. They had first two sons; a little daughter followed; then in the dawn of March 25th, 1831, their third son, Arthur Mac-Murrough Kavanagh, came into the world.

Alas! the infant appeared to have been born to tragedy!

After the birth which occurred at dawn, the nurse hastily bundled the child up into warm flannels; then rocked it in her arms in dismay. The doctor looked worried and concerned. He had to tell Captain Kavanagh; the father must break the news to the poor mother; and soon the news was being whispered in consternation everywhere about the waking household, that Lady Harriet had borne a son that had neither feet nor hands.

One is reminded of Blake's poem:

"My father groaned, my mother wept,  
 Into the dangerous world I leapt  
 Helpless, naked, piping loud,  
 Like a fiend hid in a cloud."



All day, hopes for the infant's improvement in the future were held out for comfort to his parents, and all day rejected.

They could but hope their little child might die, but it had a strong heart and good lungs; it would live. By nightfall they were resigned.

Sadly but bravely together they faced their trouble, as Lady Harriet's candles burnt low, and the fire sank to ashes on that dark March night, the first after the strange birth in the chill dawn.

But at last the spring had gone by, and Borris was in all its late summer beauty, with its lawns and great trees and its clear brown brook (a rushing trout-stream that dashes into the River Barrow); and by this time, when the infant invalid was six months old, the legend of the little "Monster" had been completely forgotten.

For, as he lay in his cot in the nursery in the "comet" stage of infancy, that is in long clothes, and with the sleeves of his baby's robe tied up like bags, anyone who bent over him saw beautiful intelligent eyes; a broad brow; a clear fair skin. After giving one long grave look at his visitors—if he liked them, he would break into smiles. It was

perceived that in spite of his afflictions he was growing up a spirited and charming child, and all who had received the little boy so badly on the day of his birth had by now begun to love him. All his childhood he was made much of at Borris, but he was not spoilt or pampered. Indoors he was carried on the shoulders of the grown-ups; or was wheeled about in a chair; on his walks he was strapped into a basket saddle on a pony's back.

But we will pass on to his eighth year when his Mother having gone on a journey, Arthur was sent with his nurse to be taken care of, and received as a pupil for a time by a Mr. Greer, Rector of Celbridge in Kildare. This village is at the gate of Castletown in which eighteenth-century house lived his mother's cousin, Colonel Conolly.

The Colonel had children of his own, and one of them, Mary, later wrote an account of Arthur Kavanagh. She says:

"I remember well this first meeting with the merry-looking fair-haired boy, in a chair saddle riding his pony, led by a lad, and in the most fearless way trying to get it to go through a very narrow gate. Of course he succeeded (as he usually

did in whatever he attempted, even at that early age), to the admiration of us, his cousins; and from that day we became friends, drawn to him by his singularly engaging character—*genuine, manly, full of sympathy*—a most delightful boy!

“He was sent to Mr. Greer, partly to be in reach of the great Dublin surgeon, Sir Philip Crampton, whose rare professional skill it was hoped might devise some mechanism to make up for what had been denied him in physical development. Much pain, great discomfort and continual disappointment were all that came of it: sympathy from us, his child friends, was gladly received by him,” Mary continues. “Even as children we could not but wonder at his cheerful submission to his many annoyances and discomforts; but he had a fine unselfish nature, and was grandly submissive in his sense of privation. His half holidays were spent with us. He used to ride up to Castletown from the rectory; his faithful nurse, Anne Fleming, in attendance. Delightful were those afternoons! Arthur, from his chair or his pony, led the games. We were all so devoted to him as to be his most willing subjects. As though he were a King we would follow

his will as law, and he often led us into the most ridiculous pranks."

Everybody at Borris had expected, after the Dublin doctor's failure with him, that physically nothing but a comparatively supine existence could be hoped for, for the crippled Arthur Kavanagh; but to everyone's surprise by marvellous intuitive skill, will-power, and a fine dashing sense of life, he learned to do almost everything that the normal man can do, better than most men. He had a handsome countenance, and by the time he had reached manhood, when seated in his chair or on horse-back, looked strong, lithe, manly and broad-shouldered. He wore a black kilt gracefully covering his limbs like a robe, and he wore frieze shooting jackets and was always well groomed. By practice, his shoulders became so supple and strong and nervous that he made his arms under the shirt sleeves do almost all the work that ordinary arms can do.

He had a steel hook attached to his shoulder, an inch of it showing beyond his shirt cuff. Many of his activities depended on it; he used it for instance for fishing, handling reins, sailing, writing.

As time went on, his prowess on horseback

showed him, considering his infirmities, to have about as much physical courage as it is possible for a man to possess, and he had magnificent presence of mind. His basket chair days of riding were over by his tenth year; nevertheless in riding, all his life the saddles he used had a kind of padded chair seat, in which he was properly secured by a strap. He manipulated the reins ingeniously, and also managed to use a whip. He had ridden, as we have seen, from earliest childhood, but no one had imagined they would see him in the hunting field. He took that matter into his own hands, however; and after following the hounds modestly all his boyhood, and quietly taking in the ways of the whole hunt, by his sixteenth year he had come to ride as straight across country as any of the sportsmen who hunted with the Kilkenny or Carlow foxhounds. Once, at a more than usually large fence in the midst of a run, the whole field actually pulled up in horror at seeing Kavanagh far ahead, putting his horse at it; and only breathed again when they saw him galloping away on the other side!

He liked adventurousness in driving and when a boy, was often seen rushing along the lanes in Car-

low with an improvised tandem; or setting out to fetch his favourite step-nieces (contemporaries of his own) from their home in the neighbourhood with an unexpected four-in-hand of ponies.

Wild animals were so docile with him, it was hard for him to remember the effect they might have on other people. His wild ape, for instance, bought from a sailor off a ship in Kinsale Harbour, came riding home to Borris on the front seat of a dog-cart, sitting next its new master as quiet and civilized as any visitor coming to occupy a spare room; arrived at the front door, however, the monkey rushed into the house and up the staircase, and with a bound and a grab seized a pearl necklace from a lady's throat and swallowed it.

When not driving, and not in the house, Kavanagh lived for the most part in the saddle all his life. He rode about everywhere on business; he shot from horseback, and when fishing from the banks of a stream he was always on a pony.

Evelyn Lady de Vesci, who lived in Ireland after her marriage and was acquainted with Arthur Kavanagh, has told the present writer that she met him for the first time when he was in full manhood;

and she recounts that his head and shoulders then reminded her of Bismarck's.

"He took me for a walk round the demesne," she writes of a visit to Borris, "I, on foot; he on a fidgety little mare, and seated in a chair saddle. It was hot July weather, and he kept the flies away with unerring aim with his whip; and would not let me open the gates, but managed to do all things himself.

She said that after the first time of seeing him, she never thought of his infirmities; "his charming voice and his unselfconscious and remarkable personality led one quite away from them".

He was deeply religious and possessed all his life that sense of spiritual unity which is the essence of faith; a mystical sense that this life is but a part of something greater than itself was constantly present with him. He had a gift of silent prayer that all his life seemed to bring a particular harmony to him, at difficult times, when he was in sore need of comfort.

He said of himself that he was "proud, inconsistent, and *terribly* wanted things that it was impossible for him to have." Some of his struggle as a

cripple is shown when he inscribed on the first leaf of a secret diary, at fifteen years old:

“Though dark my path and sad my lot  
Let me be still, and murmur not”;

followed by a short prayer for the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The writing, performed with a pen held in the steel hook coming out of Kavanagh's shirt sleeve, has actually both beauty and character. It is a clear “script”, very small: the writing of an artist.

Arthur Kavanagh's mother herself was an exceptionally gifted water-colourist and ingenious with her fingers. It was perhaps from her that he inherited his skill. Certainly it was with the zeal of an artist that he worked at all the things he himself must learn to do with practice and in his own way. What others learnt with ease, whether it was to write, or to draw, or shoot, or fish, or sail a boat, or handle reins, or whatever it might be, he acquired in his own way, but quite efficiently.

Kavanagh had a practical character, and he had a marked gift for leadership of men. The Army and the Navy were the natural careers of the younger sons of the family, and he himself would have made



a fine officer of his own early Victorian and "Balaclava" day had such a career been possible to him.

His ideal for life, when he took it into his own hands, remained firmly traditional and conservative, though his own character was independent, with a romantic love of adventure.

But to return to his life as a boy at Borris.

His mother, Lady Harriet, who was by now a widow (her husband, Captain Kavanagh, who was much older than her, having died when her children were still in the nursery), decided wisely that Arthur must travel for his education, as it was certainly impossible that he should go to school. To be perpetually at Borris doing exactly what he liked in spite of strict tutors, with an entourage of an adoring family, including cousins, in the end might be narrowing, and not give him the proper proportions of life. She took him therefore to St. Germain's to learn French, and spent some time in Rome with him where he was intensely happy. He loved travelling, and it was a delight when his mother one day proposed more ambitious family travels.

It was the year 1846, nine years after Queen

Victoria's accession. At Borris, Lady Harriet was renowned for her kindness and good spirits, and now she immensely enjoyed planning a journey for herself, her eldest boy Tom, and Arthur, and her daughter; and the boy's tutor, Mr. Wood, a clergyman. They would be away two years; they would travel slowly to Egypt and live for some time on a boat on the Nile; and then they would follow the track of the Israelites through the desert to the Holy Land and finally return home by way of Italy. Arthur, who was in his sixteenth year, and his eldest brother, Tom, and his sister, Harriet (who was always called "Hoddy" and was an exceptionally beautiful girl), now packed up, and prepared for the journey with the greatest excitement. Lady Harriet and her daughter equipped themselves for the East with shady hats and cool habits, but these last sensibly short (or anyhow "shortish" for that early Victorian day), so as not to trail in the desert sand. Lady Harriet, who had a passion for painting in water colours, filled her paintbox with fresh cobalt for the Eastern skies, and with yellow ochre for the Sahara. Mr. Wood decided to take with him his clerical riding breeches, and packed up a

box of the classics for the Kavanagh's lessons; the boys would take their old shooting jackets for the Nile, and packed their guns. They took their diaries; also a book of Lord Byron's poetry, and several maps. The family Bibles and Prayer Books were remembered, and stowed away in their great trunks, as were also folding easels and sketchbooks; and senna and liquorice and "pommade divine" and other English remedies, foreign notepaper for their letters, and quill pens.

By the middle of October, in 1846, the family had reached Cairo and had hired two Nile sailing boats and begun a leisurely ascent of the river.

Their excellent Arab servants served them well. Arthur learnt Arabic in a very short time, and though he was the youngest of the party, acted always as the family interpreter and guide. "His shooting is as wonderful as his riding," wrote Tom, in a letter home from the Nile. "He has shot a great many wild geese and snipe." Sport along the river banks seems to have been the chief entertainment of the brothers, who, however, all their mornings had their noses kept firmly to the grindstone learning Greek, Latin and history with Mr. Wood. The

English Sunday was kept as a matter of course, with a morning service on board the barge; and every day the party read the Bible together and had family prayers, as at home.

Lady Harriet sketched to her heart's content and her daughter "collected". They were joined by a few congenial friends who shared the life and added an interest to the tranquil days. The boys were joined by the rest of the party in some of their shooting expeditions, and they all lit fires and boiled kettles, after jackal hunts and other sport. "The best shooting in the world, I believe, is to be found on the Nile," wrote Arthur in a letter home. "We have wolf and wild boar and hyena hunting; also coursing gazelles with beautiful Persian greyhounds."

They sat in the moonlight in the midst of ruins; and they saw lovely birds; among these, white pelicans and gold and green humming birds. They were loath to leave their barge-life, even after about twelve weeks of it. But they were quite due by that time in the desert. It will be remembered that they had intended to make for "the Wilderness" and "the Promised Land".

"We enjoyed the desert immensely," was the news a few months later in a letter from Arthur to his brother Charlie at home, written from Beyrouth not far from Tyre on the Levant. "We had a *very* jolly time of it. We crossed it in force, having joined with three other parties, making in all sixty camels. At Hebron we exchanged camels for the Syrian horse."

Arthur seems to have grown very fond of the Bedouin Arabs. "They are so good-natured and hospitable," he writes in the same letter. "We often got into their encampments, particularly on our way from Jerusalem to Damascus, and used to stop with them till our tents came up, when we got to work to pitch and get ready for passing the night."

The Arabs seemed to have returned Arthur's enthusiasm, for in a letter home his brother Tom wrote, "At Damascus when riding through the bazaars Arthur encountered a number of Bedouin and Arab sheikhs whom he got acquainted with in the desert and with whom he is a great favourite. As soon as they saw him they all ran up, and kissed him on both cheeks!"

"I bought a horse from the governor of Hebron,

and I have ridden him all the way from Hebron to Beyrouth," Arthur's letter to his brother Charles goes on. It will be remembered that he is now only sixteen, and certainly that is a more arresting remark than any he would have been likely to make in a Sunday letter in mid-term from Eton or Winchester, had he been able to go to either of these schools, or to any other.

"I am writing this letter at a window looking out on the Levant," he goes on, "and while I was drinking a glass of sherbet, it was blown off the table into the dirty street below, but as you see I have got it back all safe.

"We have parted with our Arab servants to-day; but we are going to take Ishmael, our dragoman, to Ireland. He is a very nice sort of fellow. I am sure you will like him. Tom has got a Turkish dress; Hoddy a lady's dress; and I have got a Bedouin's costume. We have got horse pistols, sabres, scimitars; daggers and knives innumerable; also shields made of giraffe and crocodile skins.

"I am sure you would enjoy the East immensely—the most delicious fruit, and everything enjoyable.

"It seems as if it were a dream, a fairy land. How is Prince (a spaniel) and my hound? . . . I have got plenty more to say only I have neither time nor paper."

Arthur appears to have been immensely impressed with the scenes of Bible history; especially with the solemnity of Mount Sinai; and to be actually following the path of the Israelites and passing through the Wilderness between Egypt and Canaan seemed a wonderful adventure. Early Victorian sportsmen, however, as always, he and his brother seem to have seen a little more hunting in the Holy Land, and even outside the walls of Jerusalem they must "run a wolf with the dogs".

The next news is of Arthur's parting from his horse at Cairo before going home. "He was the admiration of everyone," he writes. "His limbs fine without a puff; almost a milk-white coat, shining like glass. His eye, and the expression of his countenance *fiery, yet sweet*—an odd phrase to use about a horse, but I do not know any other which expresses what I want so well."

Later, when the horse had to be sold: "Poor beast! I cried the day I left him. He knew me so

well! He used to lick my face when I came out of the tent in the morning to see him, and at the luncheon time in the heat of the day when I used to sit under him for shade, he would put his head between his front legs to take a bit of bread, without moving for fear of hurting me."

This is the last of Arthur's news from the East. The family travelled back to England by Italy, and in the spring of 1848 they were back at Borris.

But they had returned to a troubled Ireland. It was the painful year of the rebellion of 1848 and Lady Harriet feared that her eldest son, Tom, now just in that year come of age, and a landlord, and even Arthur, might get mixed up in politics; and while they were so young and inexperienced, yet headstrong, that was the one thing she desired they should not do. An escapade of Arthur's had met with great disapproval from her and her agent. Arthur had gone to stay with his great-aunt, Lady Ormonde, in her country house near Slieve-na-Man, where Smith O'Brien, who led the rebels, was encamped. While there, Arthur used to ride out alone at night, and reconnoitre the rebel outposts. One night he was discovered. Only the



cross-country prowess of his horse "Bunny" saved him from being captured in his chair saddle. "There was to be no more of this kind of thing" was Lady Harriet's swift resolve. Her young Jackanapeses were not responsible politicians and the boys were to go off on foreign travel again.

With her faith in the educative powers of journeys she proposed now another expedition to the East for her two sons; this time a more ambitious one, to keep them out of mischief for some eighteen months. The party was only to consist of Tom, now twenty-one, Arthur, now eighteen, the inseparable tutor Mr. Wood, and Arthur's servant.

They would travel through Finland, Russia, Kourdistan and Persia; and after Persia into India. This they did; but the undertaking in those times proved a most strenuous one, and they only managed to reach Bombay one year and seven months after starting. They left Ireland in the summer of 1849. They travelled very light, but took four gun cases.

Arthur keeps a diary consisting of rough records of the journey, from the 4th of June, 1849, when they started, onwards, all through the time until

November, 1850. They had soon left Finland and Russia, and had reached Turkey.

After that, what a journey! What hardy travellers!

The diary tells of leaving Baghdad, and then crossing the rapids over the Bridge of Nimrod on a raft made of goat skins, and of coursing with greyhounds at Nineveh. Then later, of the march into Kourdistan and on into little-known regions in the interior; of desperate cold encountered, and floundering in snow drifts and sleeping in holes in the snow, with clothes frozen to their bodies like suits of mail; the thawing of clothes almost worse. Of hard days "going" on horseback, often supperless at bed-time; of hospitable Khans who let the travellers down nevertheless over sport, or over transport mules, though they had been promised to them; of messy meals eaten cross-legged with Shieks of the desert, who told fibs. Of a Kourd Khan who was the most gloriously handsome man they had ever seen, and more picturesquely dressed and armed than any Turk or Persian Prince; nevertheless an atrocious bore! Of fishing, and their transport mules swimming across a river at sunrise, then

"hard going" till dark to find a miserable "Karavan-serai" (Inn), for the night, and one old cock to appease the appetite of a whole party; of being on one occasion cut off on all sides by a kind of prairie fire, their horses taking fright, while riding through an oak wood, with the tops of the trees blazing; of their dash through it, their bolting horses tearing away for miles across country, checked at last by a river into which they had a glorious plunge; of days of marching on almost impassable road tracks in pouring rain, ending in dismal and filthy quarters, nevertheless of coursing with greyhounds, the minute the sun came out; of halting to say their prayers every now and then on the march.

Except for two poor murdered travellers (Conolly and Stodhart) the Kavanaghs and Wood were the only foreigners who had ever as yet travelled in this region of Kourdistan, and all the time they themselves encountered hostility, and had several skirmishes and escapes.

"We considered when we came out of Kourdistan that we had owed our whole skins to our poverty; possessing little more than our horses, rifles, and a change of shirts. . . ."

But now the travellers passed into Persia.

In that country on a hot march from *Bushire* to *Shiraz* they came to "One of the grandest mountain passes it is possible to behold"; but what had they before them?

"A sheer perpendicular wall of rock above; then, worn out of the solid rock, a narrow causeway barely wide enough to take a loaded mule—a sheer perpendicular precipice of rock below, losing itself in the shades of a dark and terrible abyss, and no parapet to save you from the effect of a single false step," says Kavanagh, and the account continues: "I was just rallying from a long bout of fever myself—as weak as a cat; my strength—artificial, derived from a daily dose of sixteen grains of quinine."

"I do not know quite how it happened, but the mule in front of me, laden with a deal box, stumbled and struck the corner of the box against the rock; the shock staggered him, and I fancy I can see the unfortunate beast now, and hear his cry of agony as he fell over the brink, the echo of the crash at the bottom being the last we ever heard of him or his load! It lasted but a minute, but in a

second you may live an age; it would have been a relief to screech were it not for shame; and as the rear part of the caravan pressed on behind, on I had to go."

The party passed from this narrow ledge with a sigh of relief into a beautiful valley full of oak trees.

A few days later they came upon an unexpectedly good Eastern inn with a great courtyard; and in this Karavanserai the sporting travellers rest and strengthen themselves by eating chicken and cheer themselves up by drinking "arak"; and from there join a Khan in gazelle hunting with the usual beautiful Persian hounds.

Fever then follows again for Arthur; overtaking him during arduous rides across Persia; and then once encamped near Sultania he suffered much during the nights in tents. Though keeping his fever down with quinine so as to go out shooting during the day, he nevertheless grew so ill that his companions became alarmed. Fortunately a young Persian Prince, Malichus Mirza, a sportsman, at this point had befriended the travellers. He had taken them out gazelle hunting, and he had been

impressed by Arthur's riding and shooting in the region; had noticed the command of his fine voice over horses and dogs who seemed to give up their wills to his. All Arthur Kavanagh's achievements, handicapped as he was by his great infirmities, amazed Malichus Mirza; also his fluent Arabic and Persian. When presently he found he had fallen terribly ill, he had him moved to his own palace in Sultania to be nursed. Arthur was carried there in delirium and woke from unconsciousness to find himself in the Prince's Harem being looked after by an old black woman slave.

Malichus Mirza had told her Arthur was "a god". She must take the greatest care of the stranger. She devoted herself to him and when he had reached convalescence she used to conduct him, wrapped in a Persian robe, to the ladies' quarters in the Harem for a change.

There it was at once perceived that if not a convalescent "god", Arthur was anyhow a young and charming "gentleman". The ladies of the Harem told him long stories, many of them touching in their descriptions of how they were carried off from their homes. One of them, a beautiful

little Armenian, awoke his deepest compassion (and his sympathy was great) by her pathetic longing for her own relations and home.

The unsophisticated Prince Malichus Mirza—with turban and beautiful coloured robes; jewelled belts, and arms; harem, bath, garden, and greyhounds—appears to have been much like the princes whose lives we have seen depicted in Persian miniatures.

Restored to health, Arthur is, however, thoroughly glad to step out of this "Persian Miniature" in which he had lived for a few weeks. A hare hunt in the Prince's "garden" (a wilderness of forty-five acres) was the last event before he left. A preposterous number of turbanned retainers had taken part, rushing in on the hare from all points of the compass, and making it a puerile and unsportsmanlike affair, much disapproved of in the journal.

Kavanagh's diary rarely carps or criticises, but there is an air of "shrugging shoulders" at human shortcomings half-humorous, half-despairing.

It was now January, 1850, and he had reached the age of nineteen. The travellers had been thoroughly disappointed both in Kourdistan and

Persia as happy hunting-grounds for sportsmen. Wood had nearly died; Tom and Arthur also had been dangerously ill with fever; so had Arthur's servant who had had to be invalided home. The party were thankful to come away. "Spent the evening receiving guests," Arthur's diary says, on the last day in Persia. "A species of entertaining I cordially detest, especially when the visitors are Persians. Their compliments and their never-ending lies are enough to disgust any man with common sense."

It had been from Baghdad that they had made their way into the interior of Kourdistan and on to Persia; and now they appear to have gone back to the city of the Caliphs before proceeding to India.

The whole party reached Bombay more or less ill, from the ardours of their travels, but once in India they are soon (with "Billy", a cousin, and some of his fellow-officers) off after "pig", or partridge, or snipe; or are deer-stalking. Then at last Arthur and Tom kill two tigers after several exciting tiger shoots.

The Kavanaghs were fascinated, even awed when they got to India in 1850. It was, it will be remem-



bered, in the hey-day of Queen Victoria's early rule and tradition, seven years before the Mutiny, that they were seeing it. The East India Company was a romantic reality; wealth abounded; also adventure of every kind.

Though Arthur liked shooting, he writes: "There are few things I enjoy more than, unseen, to watch the movements and habits of wild animals—to see them as they are among themselves, pursuing their various devices. I have often lost a shot by thus indulging my fancy and in no single instance did I ever regret it."

"The variety of game one sees in the hot season in India waiting through the night at a 'do' or pool, the only one perhaps within miles! each coming in his own peculiar fashion; the timid deer—listening for every sound—trying each breath of air, for the taint of an adversary; the sneaking hyæna, the wolf and jackal with their slouching gait, on the qui vive, alike for prey as for danger."

After reaching India in 1850, Arthur's travel diary ends. It is all written with his hook, in the same clear "script" that he had already formed in boyhood; neat, small, and thoroughly individual.

Difficult days were now in store both for Tom and for Arthur Kavanagh.

These two young men had been about to return to Ireland, and set about leading a serious life. That was their intention; they were not going to be "squanderers of Castle Squander". Tom would settle down at Borris now he was twenty-three, and Arthur now just twenty should help him with the estate as sub-agent: together they would learn everything that they ought to know about the appallingly difficult state of Irish affairs.

But alas! for human plans and desires. Soon after their tiger hunt, Tom had begun to feel very ill in Aurangabad, and one night he woke up in his bungalow, seized with a severe hæmorrhage. The doctor at once gave a most alarming report of his condition. He had recognized a case of rapid decline, though hope was held out to the patient himself that a long sea voyage might save his life.

The doctor said he ought to sail for Australia straight away. Wood insisted on this, and decided he himself must also go, to take care of Tom. By the time their passages to Melbourne were paid,

there was no money left for Arthur to leave India. He must remain, and wait for money to arrive to take him home to Ireland.

Poor Tom had only been a month at sea when he breathed his last, cared for by the faithful Wood who after continuing alone upon the voyage, died, himself, as the result of an accident soon after reaching Australia.

When the news of Tom's death came to India, the blow to Arthur was crushing. Even before the news reached him, he was feeling forlorn enough alone.

At the time he had gone to see the poor sick Tom embark for Australia, the thirty shillings which he jingled in his pocket was the only money he possessed; but he reassured Tom and Mr. Wood that they need not worry about him. Money from Borris would come by return of mail, and enable him to return to Ireland.

But the money did not arrive until six whole months had passed. It had been taken for granted that a large enough cheque had been sent by an earlier mail. There was no money to spare. Enormous sums had to be spent in support of Irish

tenants suffering from the miserable times, and no rents had been paid. Arthur, alone in an unpaid-for bungalow in Aurangabad, became more and more worried about his life. He had not even his Irish servant William with him to help him in his infirmities. He often had only one meal a day, pretending he had others, for all the friends he met were newly made and he did not like to accept more than a certain amount of hospitality from officers, many of whom were themselves needy and in debt.

He lived much alone, for though he made friends easily, "going into society" depressed him. His infirmities were wretchedly worrying just now to this proud and homeless wanderer in India, and he appears to have gone through great despondency at this time. Had he not been a cripple, now that he was twenty, he would have been in the Army like his brother Charles, or in the Navy, or going to the Bar.

To get some job and remain in India was his hope. He wondered, for instance, if anything could be made of his riding?

His regimental friends at the station were most

helpful. They all liked Kavanagh and did their best to see what could be found for him to do; and fortunately it was discovered that a carrier of despatches between one part of the district near Aurangabad and another, was needed. This poorly paid but responsible job, that involved fast arduous rides at short notice, was offered to him, and he accepted it.

Kavanagh became a familiar figure seated in his brave unique saddle, starting out at sunrise, going full tilt upon a cross-country ride; or, after riding hard all day, slowly coming in on a tired horse by moonlight to the station. He thus just managed to support himself; but after a time he accepted a better appointment in the surveying department of the Poonah district under the East India company at £400 a year. Continuing this work for two years he was found to be invaluable at his job, and was promised an excellent career if he would stop with the East India Company. Fate, however, was against this; for, tragic to tell, his second brother, Charles, who was a subaltern in the 9th Hussars, some time after Tom's death, was also seized with illness very suddenly, and died.

Thus in 1854, Arthur became the owner of Borris, and he relinquished his Indian career and sailed for Ireland. With his mother in deep mourning for her two eldest sons, he settled down at home again at the age of twenty-three.

He worked early and late to get things into good order on his estate—a very landlord of landlords, working on patriarchal lines; very practical; very energetic; and very soon enormously respected and sought after for his thoroughness, by conservative “boards”, committees, and commissions on public affairs, and by the Church of Ireland.

Work overwhelmed him. He gave up hunting at the age of thirty-two, finding it took up too much of his time. In 1863 very reluctantly he sold his hunters, also his little pack of harriers that he had hunted himself. Thenceforward he had not much time for sport of any kind, though at the rising of the May fly he would be off to Lough Arrow in Sligo, to fish, or to the West Meath Lakes, or occasionally for a few weeks to Norway. Sailing he never gave up till the last days of his life. Every year he made a short cruise in a schooner he had had built of 130 tons which he christened the “Eva”.

Sometimes he went for duck shooting to Holland; sometimes to Corfu; and from the Ionian Isles would land from the yacht for sport on the shores of Albania. At sea he always took regular watches—four hours in the day, four at night—delighting in the daily work of sea-going life and navigation; and there was nothing he did not know about sailing. "The sea wave washes down all man's annoy," he was fond of quoting from Euripides.

When he was away in India, Kavanagh had thought a great deal over the question of marriage.

When he took risks in life, which he constantly did, it seems as if he took them because his instinct told him where he could trust himself. He now decided he would be able to make a wife happy. He had fallen in love with a distant cousin, Miss Frances Forde, the daughter of a clergyman ("Fuz" he always called her), some time before he had started on his journey to the East.

But he was nevertheless diffident as to whether she could care for him. To his relief on his return to Ireland he found that she was overjoyed to see him. Frances Forde, herself, in fact, loved Arthur Kavanagh with a deep devotion. When in the year

1856 at the age of twenty-five, and after succeeding to Borris, he proposed to her, she accepted him without hesitation.

They were married in Dublin in the drawing-room of his aunt, with only his mother and sister, and two others present. The young couple settled down at Borris in deep contentment with each other; "Fuz" remaining his devoted companion all through life. They had seven children, all well formed, who grew up happily at Borris, shouting about the nurseries and passages of the old house, and playing their games about the woods and brook.

A sketch of Arthur Kavanagh's ordinary day at Borris will give a picture of his life, as he led it for many years. He was up by six o'clock on summer mornings and by daylight in winter, and rode over the demesne to inspect all the work that was in progress. The village of Borris was slowly rebuilt with good cottages which he had designed himself. His acquaintance with farming and forestry became practical and minute. He was in closer touch with the wants of the country than the majority of landlords; he knew his tenants intimately. The



meaning of the word Landlord to him was "the tenant's friend" and he felt his responsibilities.

From his early rides he would return to family prayers, read by himself.

Later in the morning, followed by his retriever and many other dogs, and at one time by a little tame bear, he went to the courtyard of the Elizabethan house, where almost in the centre of the court grows a stout oak tree with a stone seat encircling it. Here with his bear at his side and his dogs about him he would sit and wait for any tenants who (knowing that Mr. Kavanagh was always to be found at this hour) presently came to seek his counsel. On wet days he received them indoors, but when fine, always in this courtyard where the morning sunshine filtered through the leaves of the oak, and cheerfully warmed him where he sat smoking and considering, questioning, deciding, and taking pains to give the right kind of sympathy, and proper judgments. Tenants brought papers that they could not understand, for him to sign; letters that they could not read; wills to be made; demands for work for sons and daughters; they talked over marriages; and asked advice of every

kind, coming always of their own free will. Their coming to Borris from far and wide shows how useful in the remote country was such a patriarchal court at that time as that held under the oak. They found Kavanagh's judgment sound, and trusted him. Among other things they found their landlord sympathetic and just in matters that concerned their religion. He knew what it meant to them; and never forgot how vital an element the Catholic Church was in Ireland.

After several hours contracting business under the oak, Kavanagh would then mount his little mare, "Miss Nolan", and be off again on duties round about Carlow. At Christmas time, when tenants received presents he used to have as many parcels as possible tied to his own saddle and then he would ride off into the mountains to deliver them at distant farms and cabins difficult of access.

In his strolls on horseback about the demesne he used to like to take up any of his guests staying in the house to sit behind, on sturdy "Miss Nolan"; and in this way close in conversation, would be seen going about the deer park, or by the brook, or in the woods.

At Borris, Kavanagh himself was always the life of the whole house. His charming voice, his kind and human sympathy and his good spirits were missed when he was absent. Later in life the good spirits were damped. Care, political disappointment, and failing health took these away; the charm of manner, sympathy and supporting helpfulness to others remained.

But these few details of his life only show him as a benevolent country gentleman of the old school, going about his own demesne. As a matter of fact, he was forced into the grim politics of Ireland more and more as life went on. He was needed for his practical experience by his party. He became High Sheriff of Kilkenny and Lord-Lieutenant of Carlow; Member of Parliament for Wexford, and finally, in 1868, he became one of the two members for Carlow.

No one apparently ever thought of his infirmities as a drawback to public appointments or election to Parliament, so completely did the spirit of this man dominate the physical.

Gladstone, though opposed to him, respected him very much.

Kavanagh's Irish political enemies, however, were many. These with a "hatred of the British Crown and connexion" imagined such a landlord of landlords to be merely a frivolous patrician, arrogant, with a superficial understanding of Ireland.

As a matter of fact his knowledge of the life of Irish people of all classes was intimate; also of land-history, land-legislation, and agrarian problems.

No one felt more strongly than he did the mistakes of many of his own class and the indifference to the poverty of their tenants. He recognized that Irish discontent originated in bad treatment. The results were being felt. Landlords themselves had had many a lesson. Even the Penal Laws were still telling, in that they had never been forgotten. "The declared object of these", as Burke said, "had been to reduce the Catholics of Ireland to a miserable population without property, without estimation, without education."

Nevertheless, Kavanagh himself doubted the power of Ireland's proletariat, now, (speaking of his own day) to bring order and prosperity into the

country; knowing from practical experience of what ignorant and violent elements politically it was, in his day, composed, whatever may have been the causes that had brought about such a bitter condition. He agreed with Mr. Trevelyan (then Irish Secretary), when he said that there were by now two Irelands—"the Ireland of the intelligent, well-educated, law-abiding and the comparatively prosperous; and the Ireland of the superstitious, ignorant, disloyal, and poverty-stricken." These last "had been found permanently opposed to *any government of any kind*; and were continually led by agitators dangerous to the order of the whole community." In a paper written at this time but not published, Kavanagh went on to say, "The division Mr. Trevelyan has described, exists in so marked a degree that unless it is thoroughly understood, it is idle for anyone to attempt to prescribe a cure for Ireland's condition. It is what I may call a sort of dual life; no other word would describe it. We have two distinct classes constituting her population. The first or loyal class who would *live and let live*, and be only too glad to be left alone to pursue their avocations in peace, includes a far larger

number of the poorer grades such as *tenant farmers*, *small shopkeepers*, and *tradesmen* than many would believe." But Kavanagh pointed out that this class was seldom or never heard of.

"Its members hold aloof from mobs and political meetings; indeed they are too passive, too quiet; their existence as a class is even doubted, but for all that, it is certain; and their presence affords a glimmer of hope of present times." (He was writing in 1883.)

Kavanagh himself wished to see a coalition of loyal liberals and conservatives. He said he wished some well-meaning English politicians could hear the discussions in Irish public-houses among the ignorant, drunken, excitable men who committed political murders. He pointed out how much less often landlords were murdered under the auspices of the Land League than farmers, labourers and herds. "There are no illusions about these matters in Ireland," he said. There it was perceived that whoever moved without the order of the Land Leaguers was a "deserter"—whoever thwarted them by individual action was an enemy."

"In short, it was", as a matter of fact, "upon the

poorest, defenceless and most thoroughly Irish section of the population that Land League agitators waged the most unrelenting war, and whom they mutilated, murdered, robbed and terrorised."

"As soon as the English radical public realize that the Irish National League never would have existed for a day and never in fact did exist, without the sanction of wilful murder, the better it will be," he said. That intellectual and educated liberal politicians could have come to believe that the *Irish political agitator* was a friend to Democracy, Kavanagh considered astonishing.

He was in favour of establishing a large class of peasant proprietors. "Once a man had a proprietary interest—something to lose—it is only the logical inference that he will become opposed to anarchy and disorder," he wrote. During the Fenian rising Mr. Kavanagh had patrolled the country on horseback fearlessly every night and was not touched; he prepared his house for siege and it was not touched. He was too much respected to be in any danger; and was entirely without fear for himself.

By 1880, however, the "old order" in Ireland, to which he ostensibly belonged, was undermined. He did not doubt that in the election of 1880 he would be thrown out of Parliament. Sure enough, two Parnellites were returned to represent the "model county" in the place of Arthur Kavanagh and Mr. Bruin. Even his own tenantry voted against him, and that his own people no longer wanted him he felt acutely.

"There is no use in brooding over it and one must guard against the natural impulse to resent it, which God alone can help me to do. I wish I could say or do something to cheer your own self, dearest Fuz," he wrote to his wife.

But he did brood. It was his own pessimistic opinion that a confused state of affairs would continue in Ireland for many a long day. Excellent schemes might be devised over and over again for the prosperity of the country; but these, regarded with mistrust by the Irish would never be allowed to mature. With gloom he foresaw that Nationalist agitators would continue to keep Ireland itself in a state of discord, and that could only result in bringing the poor into worse poverty.



Kavanagh's fifty-fifth year found him aged and grave; he felt ill and depressed. He continued to devote himself to his simple religion and to work; but by his fifty-seventh year he seems to have felt himself to be dying. To wish to exist merely by dexterity, was not in his nature. With the spirit tired, and no longer buoyant for life on earth, he wished to go.

His devoted wife herself hoped that complete rest in their house on London might do him good; but he only arrived there to grow worse. On Christmas Day, 1889, attacked by pneumonia when in an extremely weak state, Kavanagh passed away; mercifully spared a suffering old age. They buried him at Borris. In the little ruined Church on Bally Coppigan, among the hills, where he was laid to rest, part of the inscription graven on his tomb was, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."



HENRY FAWCETT

1833-1884



## HENRY FAWCETT

1833-1884

**H**ENRY FAWCETT was born in 1833, the son of a Mayor of Salisbury, who had made a modest fortune in business in that town. As a boy, all his holidays were spent in a farmhouse which belonged to his father in Wiltshire, and he led a particularly happy country life. He fished in the River Avon, and the Itchin; was a good naturalist, and was given up to country pursuits of all kinds.

He went from school to Cambridge in his eighteenth year, and soon proved himself to be remarkably vigorous intellectually. He was full of the most excellent good sense; was extremely social and sympathetic; fond of good talk; fond of a good joke; and he was tall, strong, and energetic, with magnificent health and nerve.

Skilful at games, a good rider, a great walker and climber, nevertheless at Cambridge intellectual study chiefly absorbed him, for he was above

all a fine mathematician, also a political economist. In the mathematical Tripos he was seventh wrangler. At twenty-three he became a Fellow of Trinity Hall where he was much beloved by his friends, among whom was Leslie Stephen who said he never had such good talk in his life as with Fawcett and other chosen companions, at Cambridge.

Fawcett had decided to aim at getting into Parliament. Not being a rich man he hoped to do this by means of a successful career at the Bar; and he began to read law to this end on coming down from the University.

All was going swimmingly with his career when suddenly calamity overtook him.

One September day in his twenty-fifth year, he was out partridge shooting with his father upon Harnham Hill above Salisbury. Fawcett's father was an experienced shot, but he had bad sight in one of his eyes. Some partridges were put up over a turnip field, and he fired at a bird which was nearly in a line with his son, who had moved forward a pace without his father having noticed it. The bird itself was completely shattered, yet a few pellets of shot struck Henry Fawcett in the eyes.

He was instantaneously blinded for life.

He told his sister afterwards that like lightning it went through his mind, "I shall never see that view again!" for one of the finest views in the south of England can be seen from Harnham Hill, and as it happened he had just before been admiring the country scene in the light of lovely autumn sunshine; and in a flash it had been extinguished.

"Maria, will you read the newspaper to me?" were his first words to his sister on getting out of the cart on arrival at the house door after the accident. He wanted anyhow to show calmness to his family on getting home, but within himself he felt nothing of the kind.

Doctors came and sent him to bed to keep as quiet as possible. The next day a specialist arrived, but there was very little hope from the first; in a few days he knew he must pass his life in complete darkness. The calamity was crushing.

The father deserved pity almost as much as the son. He said his heart was broken, and it really seemed so, for he loved Henry with deepest devotion and pride.

"If only he would complain! If only he would

complain!" he kept saying, for his son had been astonishingly brave.

Sir Leslie Stephen, who wrote Henry Fawcett's biography and who knew him all his life, describes how he visited him a few weeks after the accident, and found him outwardly calm and even cheerful, though still an invalid. But Fawcett told this great friend that as he lay in the darkness when no one was with him, he went through terrible tribulation. How was he to face the future? Actually, though he had said nothing about it at the time, the idea had come to him, ten minutes after the accident, that he would do, as far as lay in his power, everything he had set himself to do in life, in spite of blindness! Yet, just then, at the time Leslie Stephen visited him, though still resolute, he could only feel utterly cheerless. A stoic calm seemed the best he could achieve.

Nothing pained him so much, in these first days, as the letters of condolence he received every morning. All spoke to the young man of "resignation" alone; and in the very evasiveness of the urgent question of the future, an impression was received that the writers all felt his life, already at



twenty-five, was ruined. It was obvious that he must be "resigned". He disliked receiving good inevitable advice! What he longed for was encouragement, yet no one spoke of any attempt at being of any use in the world henceforward, and Fawcett, who was bursting with practical energy and ability, felt he had been suddenly relegated to some insipid region out of touch with ordinary life.

As a young man, on the threshold of experience, and desiring responsibilities and a public career, this could but mean tragedy to him.

At last, however, came a communication different from all the others. It was a stiff, pompously worded old-fashioned letter and a little dull, but nevertheless it pleased him. It exhorted him to *effort*, and he felt he was therefore being treated as equal to life, which to a young man of action was much better than receiving sympathy for being completely *hors de combat*. It was from a Mr. Hopkins, his old mathematical tutor at Cambridge. Maria Fawcett read the letter aloud to her brother. It was dated Cambridge, October 10th, 1858. We will quote some of it.

"I have rarely been more grieved, my dear Fawcett, than I was by your Father's letter which informed me of the very sad accident you have met with. Your father writes almost broken-hearted, and requires comfort, I doubt not, almost as much as yourself.

"It would indeed be not only useless but false to endeavour to console you by pretending that loss of sight (the having wisdom at one entrance quite shut out) is not one of the greatest afflictions that can happen to us. It is so. It cannot but be deemed one of the severest bodily calamities that can befall us. But depend upon it, my dear fellow, it must be our own fault if such things are without their alleviation. . . . *Give up your mind to meet the evil in the worst form it can assume.* . . . You will be obliged by circumstances to depend on intellectual pursuits almost entirely for your future happiness, so far as it may depend on efforts of your own." (Here follow suggestions for study in philosophy, political economy and social science, and the formation of a systematic plan for his intellectual work.)

"The evil that has fallen upon you, like all other evils, will lose half its terrors if regarded stead-

fastly in the face, with the determination to subdue it as far as it may be possible to do so.

"But I seem, my dear fellow, to be writing you a hard-hearted letter, something like a hard-hearted doctor prescribing for a suffering patient; and yet I could weep while I write, to think of the bright hopes and aspirations so naturally entertained on the threshold of life, which must be crushed under this sad calamity. But again I say 'courage'! Cultivate your intellectual resources (how thankful you may be for them!), and cultivate them systematically; they will avail you much in your heavy hours of trial .

"Under any circumstances I hope you will visit Cambridge from time to time! I'll lend my aid to amuse you by talking philosophy or reading an Act of Shakespeare or a canto from Byron.

"I shall certainly avail myself of the first opportunity I have of paying you a visit at Layford, and shall engage you for my guide across the chalk hills. (Here follow affectionate messages.) Believe me, my dear Fawcett, Yours very truly, W. Hopkins."

"Keep that letter!" said Fawcett to his sister.

From the day he received it he was strong again in that resolution he had made ten minutes after going blind; to do (it will be remembered) as far as now lay in his power, everything he had set himself to do in life.

Very soon his friends knew that he had resolved among other things to stick to his ambition of becoming a Member of Parliament. He also resolved to be as happy as he could. "One of the first things I remember about Harry," said his wife later, "was his saying how keenly he enjoyed life."

He had always, for instance, enormously enjoyed working at his dry political economy and hard statistics for hours together, to the amusement of less strenuous friends; and he enjoyed intellectual talk with Leslie Stephen. Fishing, riding, and great walks in the country were his delight. His pleasures were homely, and among lesser relaxations he heartily enjoyed a good cigar, a good glass of wine, a good story, a good gossip with a friend, and reading a great number of newspapers by his fireside.

Now under changed conditions, cheerfulness required effort. He had inevitable fits of low spirits but Leslie Stephen, who knew him through and

through, said he thought it could safely be said that to few men is granted so large a share of happiness as it was to Fawcett. This he managed to achieve through his wonderfully spirited character and simple courage.

He was soon now carrying on his intellectual work with fair ease by means of reading aloud and dictation, and by the good use of his own memory, which was first-rate; and after about a year's incessant practice, dependence upon a secretary became a habit, and no longer irked him.

He walked from the first with unfaltering steps, and was able, alone, to get about a house, a garden, or any place he knew, perfectly well. About the Courts of Cambridge the tap tap of his stick became a familiar sound. But above all he managed (though always now of course with a companion) to continue to take long walks across country, to go out fishing, to swim, and actually even to ride and skate.

His nerve was surprising. His speed on his skates was that of any man with normal sight. Leslie Stephen speaks of skating down the frozen Cam one evening with him "leaning on a steady North-

Easter, in the glow of a sunset, at a tremendous pace. He thought nothing of a skate of fifty or sixty miles in a great frost."

"Fawcett is marvellously handy," wrote Sir Hubert Parry after describing plunging into the waves at Rustington and going for a swim with him; and his climbing over an awkward wall afterwards. He rode with a riding master he could trust, and (with a leading rein) fearlessly galloped over Newmarket Heath. He had been a first-rate fisherman all his life, and now that he was blind he still enjoyed trout fishing in the rivers he had known all his childhood and youth in Wiltshire and in Hampshire. His deep-rooted country instincts and interests remained with him. Leslie Stephen used to describe all he saw to his friend as they walked together on long days out in the country round Salisbury, Fawcett keeping a specially good memory for all the paths he had known in his boyhood, in woods, and about the Downs.

On rides and walks about Cambridge he would call at farms where he was well known by farmers who always enjoyed his visits. Talks about farming were valuable with this economist who knew all

about prices and prospects. In the Wiltshire country, round his father's home, he was the friend of country people who had known him from boyhood. "Be sure and tell Master Harry!" said one of his father's labourers (now grown an old man) to Fawcett's mother, giving her some news from his styes, "for if there's *one* thing he does take an interest in, it's pigs!"

Leslie Stephen said that Fawcett was always scrupulously considerate in all matters affecting the convenience of those on whom he had to depend for help or service now that he was blind.

His devoted father's distress over the shooting accident he never forgot, and he took the greatest pains to show him that he was, after all, as the years went by, feeling his life to be a happy one, and he wrote to him twice in every week, to keep in touch, all through his busiest years.

At the age of thirty, to his great satisfaction, he was elected Professor of Political Economy for the University of Cambridge, Henceforward he gave a yearly course of Economic Lectures, living at Cambridge for eighteen weeks of the year.

He was absorbed in all the intellectual questions

of the day. In 1863 he published his "Manual of Political Economy," which popularized the political theories of John Stuart Mill.

In 1854 Darwin's "Origin of Species" had been published, and Fawcett himself was an enthusiastic Darwinian. In 1860, in an article in Macmillan's Magazine, he takes pains to prove that religion is in no danger from Darwinism. In any case, it is his own opinion that life must have been introduced to this globe by "an act of creative will".

His election had not been accomplished without a struggle, but the year 1865 found him at the age of thirty-two, Liberal Member for Brighton.

It is not proposed to go into his parliamentary career here. His activities in the House connected with education, agricultural labour, University reform, India, etc., require special study, and belong to history. Leslie Stephen says that Fawcett's influence in Parliament was due "not only to his courage, but to his hard common sense and adherence to scientific principles and plain facts." Though a great supporter of co-operation, he was strongly opposed to Socialism. He was free from the sentimentality so common in the nineteenth



century theoretic radicals, and "any impracticable theories of radical colleagues he was apt to jump on, being more conversant than were they with the immediate affairs of the exchequer and a need of a fair balance of interest in the country, to maintain the good of all."

Fawcett's most determined opponents loved and trusted him, and no one ever doubted his absolute honesty of purpose.

The crowning success of his public life was the moment when he was made Postmaster-General in 1882, as the man, who in spite of blindness, was best suited to the appointment. He came into office at the age of forty-six, and at once set to work on this great public organization as though he were an eager capitalist trying to establish an enterprising business by good management. We must not forget that this was fifty years ago, and the British post was not yet fully organized.

Writing to his father in 1883, he says there are five things he must undertake: 1. The establishment of the parcel post. 2. The issue of postal orders. 3. The receipt of small savings. 4. Increasing the facilities of life insurance and annuities.

5. Reducing the price of telegrams. These five reforms he accomplished.

The parcel post, of course, was a great achievement. Enormous energy, and a clear head for business were required to see to all details. The negotiations with the railway companies were highly complicated; in the first year, however, 15,000,000 parcels were carried; and, once in working order, the whole scheme was an obvious success.

Matters of saving were next gone into and he issued a simple pamphlet on thrift.

He multiplied pillar boxes. The post to out-of-the-way places all over the British Isles was improved. He gained a complete mastery of the complex details of the service; and to this end he had a great many interviews with subordinates in order thoroughly to understand their views, and profit by their experience.

He was, as Postmaster-General, commander of a civilian army numbering over 90,000 persons, and to maintain the public spirit of this body was a very important part of his duties.

A post-office clerk who was a contemporary wrote later that "the whole service has been greatly

and wonderfully improved under Mr. Fawcett. He was determined to do the fair thing, so that the humblest servant of the Post Office was not left uncared for."

But we have been carried too far on in his life and must return now to earlier days.

He had been married in 1865 at the age of thirty-two to Miss Millicent Garrett. At that time he had already become Member for Brighton, and had been blind eight years. They first met at an evening party. Introduced to one another in a Kensington drawing-room filled with conversing guests, they had talked away more happily and spontaneously than is usually the case at such functions—he, towering above her in great height and strength; she, a small, precise, rather shy little woman—twelve years younger than himself, with a charming voice that gave him immense pleasure, and golden brown hair that alas! he could not see as he stood at her side.

He sought her out afterwards; they met often; and a year later they had become engaged.

He loved to have her described to him, and in old letters from relations written during his engage-

ment there are to be found descriptions of what she wore, to give him pleasure.

"The lovely plum-coloured dress with puffed sleeves"; "the beautiful pink-lined cloak"; or "the white satin"; and "the daintiness and neatness of her appearance.". Like Fawcett, she had thoroughly English country foundations. She herself was of East Anglian stock and a vigorous member of a Victorian family. Her home is interestingly described by Mrs. Ray Strachey in her excellent biography, "Millicent Garrett Fawcett" which appeared in 1931.

"Millicent's mother was deeply religious," Mrs. Strachey tells us. Her father was a merchant ship-owner, an active enterprising man, important in a small sphere, "building his own ships and brewing his own malt and sending his sailing vessels from the little harbour of Aldburgh in Suffolk to other places up and down the coast, with the produce of Suffolk farms and markets."

Millicent and her sisters, who were brought up in their father's Suffolk home on the Coast, were clever and energetic. She herself was a splendid walker, a good rider and swimmer; musical; a

great worker; a great idealist. The only objection that could be made to the marriage was Fawcett's blindness. This Millicent Garrett never thought of at all as an obstacle.

"The simple way he took it himself, and the courage this showed, was part of his worth," she said.

Mr. Garrett, however, demurred, and created the customary difficulties of the stern parent of that time. He parted them and forbade correspondence for some months. Finding at last that it could not possibly be denied that his future son-in-law was "a reliable man"; that though blind he was making a good income, and that with the shrewdness of the economist he had made sound investments, Mr. Garrett at last forsook caution and gave his consent.

The marriage was intensely happy. "The devotion between Fawcett and his wife was apparent to everyone who knew them," Mrs. Strachey tells us; and "they had about them an atmosphere of happiness that made everyone glad to be with them. . . . 'Milly, Milly, where are you? Are you enjoying yourself?' he would call to her, as she went

about the house or garden, and Milly *was* always enjoying herself. Indeed, Mrs. Fawcett said she 'enjoyed the whole of her married life'."

Though good at Blue Books, and her own life an intellectual one, Mrs. Fawcett was no "Mrs. Jellyaby". Her house was not made into a depressing dump for her own and the Professor's papers; housekeeping not put aside as "frivolous"! On the contrary her two houses, one at Cambridge and one in London were cheerful, human, and comfortable; full of books and flowers; full of kindly hospitality; a great deal of music was made in them. They divided their life between Cambridge and London.

Fawcett's parliamentary life was arduous; beside that, he had his Economic lecturing and writing. His days were entirely filled with work, but in the evenings he liked to be social, and to have people to dinner, with whom he could get good talk in his own house.

Among these there often came John Stuart Mill, and then the Economist, and the Social Reformer would pour themselves out upon all the dry topics in which they were most deeply interested.

The Fawcetts were neither of them subtle. It is probable that the more sophisticated and æsthetic intellectuals of their day may have found them "limited". But how much did these rather limited people accomplish! It was her unpretentious moderation and good sense that secured the respect of the country for her non-militant Suffrage Campaign; it was his practical energy that established such a good Postal Service as England now possesses.

But Fawcett, above all, will always be remembered as a magnificent pioneer among the blind.

One may say that he had a genius for the state of blindness. His fine spirit had marvellously conquered what might easily have been considered *dire* circumstances. Since his day, it is a blessing to be able to say that a great many things in the way of education have been accomplished to help those who live in complete darkness. That a sightless man throughout his life should, *as far as possible*, act as a seeing man has now become the principle of every blind school, yet it was Fawcett who, in England, was the first pioneer of this helpful maxim. He spoke occasionally—not often—at meetings of fellow-sufferers.

On one occasion, having told the plain story of his own struggle, he said much that gave his listeners courage. He spoke of "Effort". He thought that *Life* itself could be described as "Effort"; and that the word contains the whole Interest of *living* in all creatures on earth. (Effort, however, must not be confused with "strain" which is unnatural and much to be discouraged.) At the end of his cheerful and heartening speech, he just mentioned a particular kind of "seeing" person who, in those times, was unfortunately apt to make dreary speeches to sightless people who had not yet grown old; never giving encouragement towards cheerful "effort", but concentrating on "resignation" alone, which was suitable, of course, to those no longer young. He said how depressing he had found that himself.

No sooner had he finished and sat down among the audience than an old gentleman who was expected but had not before been in the room, entered the meeting, mounted to the platform, and much to the amusement of the blind, made just such a dismal speech!

In the year 1884 Fawcett's post-office work



happened to be more than usually hard and he was not able to take a holiday. There was nothing to show that he was over-tired, however, until one October day when his voice was weak and husky at his lecture.

He went for a ride next day, but returned heavily be-colded and feeling ill, and having passed a bad night, stayed in bed, and did some Post Office work with his secretary. He seemed a little better the next day, and he laughed over Dickens, when his wife read aloud to him in the evening.

Nevertheless, that night he grew ill with pleurisy, and on the following day he became alarmingly feverish. His doctor felt the case was grave, and Mrs. Fawcett decided to send for Sir Andrew Clark, the specialist. He arrived only to find that Fawcett was dying, and, that evening, in unconsciousness, at the age of fifty-one, after just one week's illness, the gallant Postmaster-General passed away.



W. E. HENLEY

1849-1903



## W. E. HENLEY

*The Author of "Hospital Rhymes" (1849-1903)*

IT was when he was twelve years old that the poet Henley was attacked by tubercular trouble in his leg, and in a short while he had to take to crutches.

He had a crop of carroty hair, and had the look of a strong boy, not a delicate one.

His father was a shopkeeper in Gloucester. The trade was "Secondhand books", and that was fortunate for Henley who was born with a natural gift for expressing himself and had taken from his earliest years to reading; he could browse about among the bookshelves of his father's shop to his heart's content. In this way, he found out literature; otherwise he got but a scanty education, for his attendance at the Grammar School at Gloucester was very irregular owing to incessant trouble with his foot. He was so often laid up that he

missed whole terms of work; nevertheless by the age of seventeen, before leaving, he had managed to pass a good examination. His own idea for earning a living was to take to journalism; and he could have started work in the office of a newspaper straight away had all been well with his health; but unfortunately soon after leaving school his lameness began to get worse; finally he became critically ill, and in Gloucester Hospital he had to lose his foot.

When he was at last well enough to return to his home, his life seemed to have come to a dismal standstill. The bookshop was doing very badly and hardly any money seemed to be coming in. His father was full of anxiety, for he had debts; he could only just keep his son, and could give him no pocket money whatever; the bailiffs had even come in once, and he was always in fear of being "sold up".

Thus Henley, by nature cheerful and full of vitality, was growing discouraged, despondent. Too ill to go out in the world, not ill enough to be completely laid up, yet an invalid in spite of himself, he felt life slipping from him just as he was all

keenness for the best of it, like any other youth. Large in frame, and originally meant by nature to be a man of action, he could not help feeling savagely envious of others who were better off. Here they were—the strong—with their worldly advantages!—while he himself must hang about in dingy poverty and illness.

His doctor was doing his best for him, but he was getting no better and he doubted now if any doctor could ever cure him. He had heard, however, of a Professor Lister who at this time was very much talked of and discussed, for his experiments in antiseptic surgery.

As we now know, Lord Lister's experiments in antiseptic treatment of wounds after operations was to transform surgery in the 1860's. He had siezed on Pasteur's discoveries and applied them to surgery. We may roughly say that it was his carbolic acid that turned hospitals into the cheerful places they are now, compared with the hopeless charnel houses that they, alas, mostly were, even at the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign; for septic poisonings of the system carried away even the most promising patients. "Lister's work on Anti-

septics\* involved labour and toilsome investigation and experiment of which a few can have any adequate idea," says Sir Hector Cameron. Iodoform and Listerine were later products of his experiment.

At the time that Henley heard of him, Lister was the Chief Surgeon to the Edinburgh Infirmary. The great doctor was entirely trusted by his colleagues, who were able to test his work immediately under their observation; but everywhere out of Scotland he was looked upon as a wild experimentalist, and it took some years to convert other surgeons to his methods.

Henley pondered much over Professor Lister. Why shouldn't he try him? He was now twenty-one. Once he had got to Edinburgh, he would be his own master. However, while thinking all this over, he became so gravely ill that he had once again to go into Gloucester Hospital.

He had grown to a huge manly physique by now

\*It will be remembered that the Antiseptic Method has been replaced in the surgery of to-day by the "Aseptic" Method by which bacteria are entirely excluded from the site of any operation.



and in frame had become enormous. Apart from his lame leg, he looked like an International football player, and with his fiery hair and bright lively face he appeared the embodiment of vitality. But it was useless in his case to be so powerfully built. After a consultation the doctors in the hospital told him that if his life was to be saved, the other foot would now have to come off too.

Henley had tentatively mentioned Lister.

"I have heard that Professor Lister often saves limbs," he said; but his doctor instantly scouted the idea of that experimental surgeon being any good "with his new-fangled antiseptics".

Henley then vowed violently that his remaining foot was "*Not coming off!*"

He then said that the man who was going to save his foot was Professor Lister! He would go to Edinburgh. That would settle the matter.

His family, converted by his eagerness on the subject, scraped together the expensive fare for the journey, but he must go alone, critically ill though he might be; his father could not possibly afford to send anyone with him. Thus the enterprising invalid set forth on the adventure by himself. He

nearly fainted as he hobbled through the streets of Edinburgh in the chilly morning of his arrival, on his way from the station to the grim old Infirmary. "Half-workhouse and half-jail" that place seemed to him, he said, as he approached it, and crawled in, and was waved on by the grey-haired soldier-porter "through the loud spaciousness and draughty gloom" to take his turn with other waiting patients.

At last the great Professor Lister himself appeared. He asked the boy why he had chosen to come to him rather than to surgeons nearer home? Henley implied as politely as he could that the doctors he had been under did not approve of Professor Lister, but that he himself had put his faith in him and determined to try his treatment. Lister ("with eye deep and bright, and steady looks that *still*") said nothing; but he saved Henley's foot.

It took twenty months to do it.

All those twenty months of uncertainty Henley lived in a small ward of the Edinburgh Infirmary.

Through a grimy little window by his bed he got shafts of sunshine, and watched jackdaws cawing round distant trees beyond the chimneys,

and dogs racing about on the hospital green below ; but open-air treatment for tuberculosis of course was unknown then, and he seems not to have gone out in the sun and air at all. He missed this greatly, for by nature he passionately enjoyed the sunshine, the wind, and stars. Through all the first months in the Infirmary, sharp pains often ground his leg and foot ; shoulders and loins ached ; his own sleep was poor while another sleeper "snored him to hate and despair", or a tap of a cistern leaked "till it taps upon my heart-strings—and my very life goes dripping—dripping—dripping ; drip, drip, dropping."

Later, Henley collected the poems that he wrote in the old Edinburgh Infirmary ; he called them "In Hospital: Rhymes and Rhythms". None of the other patients knew that the young man sitting up in bed against his pillows was writing fierce verses describing his sufferings and those of his fellows in the ward. They only supposed him to be a great letter writer. The poems make up an interesting history. "Enter Patient" the first poem is called, describing the day when Henley stumped up to the place on his crutches. A little girl with her

arm in a sling went in at the door before him.

"A small strange child—so aged, yet so young!  
Her little arm besplinted and beslung."

Then in the next poem he is waiting for the surgeon and the operation. "Behold me waiting." He is one of those who finds it easier to be brave if he fully grasps *all that he must face* and then bears it as well as he can. He had a Stoic philosophy.

Next in his "Hospital Rhymes" he devotes a poem to the head staff nurse. "They say the Chief himself is half afraid of her"; then "A Casualty".

When he comes to describe "the Chief" of the Infirmary, we see that is Professor Lister "battling with custom, prejudice, disease". Henley describes his "faultless patience and splendid skill". "The Scrubber" of the ward has a poem to herself.

A bitter poem comes next. Cooped up, he felt deprived of the very elements and seasons themselves.

"It is the Spring!  
A sprightliness feeble and squalid  
Wakes in the ward, and I sicken—  
Impotent Winter at heart."

Inhibiting suffering of one kind and another is

the chief theme of the hospital rhymes, fiercely described.

Nevertheless, in many of the poems Henley does not forget that Peace and Joy and Serenity are likewise to be found every minute in human experience though it may be tantalizingly round the corner, and often throughout the greater part, of an individual life. Many of the poems are even ecstatic, as when thinking of the day of his discharge from hospital, he wrote:

"Carry me out into the wind and the sunshine,  
Into the beautiful World."

Henley's friend, Sydney Low, wrote, "Deep in his own nature there was an inner well of cheerfulness and spontaneous joy of living that nothing could drain dry."

The "Old Edinburgh Infirmary" for all its grimness, brought him blessings. His life had been saved there; his second foot saved, and then the Hospital ward had had its moments! There was, for instance, the day when Anna, a Scotch girl, seventeen years old, opened the door and came into the room.

She had come to see her brother, the young

ship's engineer, laid up in one of the beds; and Henley married this charming Anna a few years after leaving the hospital.

Another good day in the Infirmary had been that on which had come to his bedside the author of "Treasure Island". That genius among story-tellers, Robert Louis Stevenson, was at this time only a young student at Edinburgh University, and not yet famous. He wrote the following account of his visit to Henley.

"Yesterday Leslie Stephen was down here to lecture, called on me, and took me up to see a poor fellow, a poet, who writes for him, and who had been eighteen months in our infirmary, and may be, for all I know, eighteen months more. It was very sad to see him there in a little room with two beds, and a couple of sick children in the other bed. The gas flared and crackled, the fire burned in a dull economical way; Stephen and I sat on a couple of chairs and the poor fellow sat up in his bed with his hair tangled, and talked as cheerfully as if he has been in a King's Palace, or the great King's Palace of the Blue air".

Stevenson, after this first visit, often returned

for more talk, bringing piles of books for Henley; and when April came and with it the first warmth of the spring, he took his crippled friend for a drive through Edinburgh. He himself carried the patient down the long stair of the hospital. Henley was a giant, and Stevenson frail; and it must have been a task getting him down it. But the effort was worth while, for it was "the top of the Spring", as Stevenson said. "The country was mad with green; cherry blossom was out against blue sky. It was a sight to set before a king, and here was a man who had been for more than a year and a half in a hospital ward! The look on his face was *fine!*"

And so Henley's enterprising painful expedition to Edinburgh, though it had meant a sojourn of a year and ten months in hospital, had been a success. He would always be desperately lame, but his life had been saved by Lister.

He was workless, and penniless, but he had his good brains; he would go to London; once free of the Infirmary he would manage to get along somehow.

Before leaving the hospital he wrote his poem "Invictus", with the refrain "I am the Captain of my Soul". (This was set to music and became a well-

known song, and there is a story of a boy being asked in a *viva voce* examination, who "Henley" was, answering, "Oh, that was the chap who was 'Captain of his Soul' wasn't it?"—as one might say "Captain of the eleven.") Now, had he been rich, and safe in life, the poem would have been of too arrogant, too boastful a temper; but knowing all that Henley had gone through and how much courage he needed for the future, the poem rings out as a brave celebration of his going into the world from the "place of wrath and tears" as he called the old Infirmary.

"Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the horror of the shade.  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me, unafraid.  
It matters not how strait the gate  
How charged with punishment the Scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the Captain of my Soul."

Released from hospital, Henley gallantly started life in London in a garret with one chair to sit on, a cup and saucer, and a fork.

It will be remembered that Leslie Stephen had encouraged him as a young poet, and now this



helpful friend of young genius brought out his "Hospital Rhymes" in the Cornhill Magazine. Soon collections of poems were published, "Echoes", and later "London Voluntaries", "Bric à Brac". Henley then became a journalist, and being remarkably able, was soon earning a good living.

For later days there is only to recount how in middle life he became a well-known editor, making a weekly paper, "The National Observer", a literary influence. Finally he started a monthly paper of his own, which prospered. He is said to have shown genius as an editor, stimulating men to write their best for him; and with his forcible personality awakening latent powers in writers. He was a self-made man and proud of the fact.

Though a captive in his chair (with the crutch always at his side), dragging himself out of it when he moved with slow painful effort, he is said to have seemed infinitely full of life.

Henley had many faults, was over-impulsive, quarrelsome and jealous. He behaved ungenerously to his friend Robert Louis Stevenson whose superior gifts as a writer he seems to have envied.

Then his political poetry was passionate rather

than good; he was not a steady and careful "thinker", but highly opinionated, and being by temperament a man of action, when he wrote about politics he loved to let himself go in streams of violent words.

It was a sort of substitute for action.

The unlovely life of Fleet Street "the dust and the din—the wrangle and jangle" (his own phrases) of the full, busy, talkative and entirely secular life that he lived as an editor until his death in 1903, often obscured the spirit of true poetry.

It is of the youthful suffering stoic days that we have given the history here, and it was in this early manhood that the lyric gift was at its best. "The voice of strange command" he had called it, that in youth had called him "as friend calls friend,

"Beyond the dark, into the dream  
Over the hills and far away."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

1850-1894



## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

*1850-1894*

**R**OBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, the only child of Scottish parents, was born in Edinburgh on the 13th November, 1850. His mother was the daughter of the Reverend Lewis Balfour, a Presbyterian minister, and his father was a civil engineer as was also his grandfather; both famous as builders of lighthouses along the stormy Scottish coast. Even at six years old Louis showed himself to be literary, for at that age he dictated a life of Moses to his mother; and already at four years old he was a little eloquent chatterbox, full of imagination in his games.

On being given a sword on his fourth Christmas Day and on his father's disparaging it (as only made of tin and a wretched toy) he protested, saying, "I can tell you, Papa, it's a silver sword, in a gold sheath, and the boy's very well off and quite contented".

He was depressed the next moment at being made to wear a shawl for fear of catching cold playing at soldiers, but was cheered up by deciding he would pretend to be "on a night march".

There was no year up till his eleventh when he was not many days in bed from illness: bronchitis, pneumonia, feverish colds or chills; and through the severe Scotch winters when these illnesses attacked him, he constantly lay awake, troubled with a hacking exhausting cough.

"Alinson Cummin, my devoted nurse, was more patient than I can suppose of an angel," Stevenson wrote. "Hours together she would help and console me, . . . till the whole sorrow of the night was at last at an end with the arrival of the first of that long string of market carts that in the dark hours of the morning came creaking into Edinburgh."

His Father and Mother were both strictly religious people, holding the tenets of the Presbyterian faith, but Alinson the nurse, herself, was even yet more austere and had in her the spirit of the old covenanters. That Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson played family whist seemed to her a danger to their souls and Louis can remember praying fervently

with her "that it might not be visited on them to their perdition".

All Louis's childhood was spent in Edinburgh in "the old grey castled city, high-throned above the Firth, with the flag of Britain flying, and the red-coat sentry pacing over all". The nursery in his parents' tall commonplace house in the town was a cheerful one on the top floor, and in Stevenson's poem, "The Lamplighter", there is a glimpse into it, at twilight, and of the imaginative little boy's life in that room.

[ My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky  
It's time to take the window, to see Leary going by.  
For every night at teatime, and before you take your  
seat,  
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the  
street.

With Alinson, Louis often went for visits to his Grandfather's Manse at Colinton, near Edinburgh; and some of the happiest days of his childhood were spent here in the early summer.

The Manse windows looked out on a lawn that basked in sunshine, and "all day long from the impending wood there came the fullest chorus of merles and thrushes and all manner of birds that it

was ever my lot to hear". In the garden of the Manse he played with many young cousins; or alone, as a solitary and imaginative child. "In the great laurel at the corner I have often lain 'perdu' with a toy gun in my hand, waiting for a herd of antelope to defile past me down the carriage drive, and waiting, need I say, in vain?"

The dream of his life, as a schoolboy, he told someone was "to be the leader of a great horde of irregular cavalry"; and his favourite attitude "turning in the saddle to look back at my whole command (some five thousand strong) following me at the hand gallop up the road, out of the burning valley by moonlight".

Stevenson never wholly ceased to be a boy, and, later as a writer of adventure stories the imaginative gusto put into the games of boyhood never failed him.

Late in his seventeenth year he became a student at the University of Edinburgh. He was now a tall stripling; very energetic and restless. His hair was black, his long face pale, and his eyes of deepest brown in colour, set extraordinarily wide apart. A friend who knew him said, "They had a shy quick glance, but when moved to anger, or fierce emo-



tion, they seemed to blaze or glow with fiery light".

He could not bear to think of himself as at all delicate, and his health at this age was still passable. Already he showed himself to be brilliant and romantic, and also very tender-hearted and kind. With starchedly conventional or hide-bound people he never got on all his life, and never attempted to do so; but for the rest, he had a perfectly magic power of winning the affection of men and women of all sorts and conditions.

There was no question of his following any other profession than that of an engineer. When he had taken his Edinburgh degree, he would go into the family engineering business that descended from father to son.

Yet as a matter of fact, from the age of sixteen onwards, he had been showing himself to be intensely literary; and his chief pre-occupation was how to learn to write.

His Father possessed a white cottage in the Pentland Hills, and here Louis spent many solitary days absorbed in writing a "History of the Pentland Rising." He described being awakened in the early morning in the cottage by the bark of a sheep dog,

and how he would be off with the Shepherd into the hills, for the day. "I would return in the early night from one of my patrols; a friendly retriever would scurry upstairs to fetch my slippers, and I would sit down with 'the Vicomte de Bragalonne' for a long, silent, solitary lamplight evening by the fire . . ." and how, before bed he "would rise from his book, and pull the blind aside, and see the snow and the winter moonlight brighten the white hills."

Though he lived with his parents all his student days, which began at the end of his seventeenth year, they complained that they never saw him. The fact was, he who later became religious, and conservative in politics, at this period of his youth declared himself to be a red-hot socialist and an atheist.

Respectability became for a time a bugbear to him, and he was more interested in the submerged part of Edinburgh company than in the cultivated and rather prim society into which he was born and bred. He was determined at this stage to live wholly to himself and do what he wished. A very small allowance gave him an excuse for dressing like a vagabond and frequenting squalid taverns, such as

"The Green Elephant," "The Twinkling Eye," or "The Gay Japanee." "Looking back upon it, I am surprised at the courage with which I first ventured alone in the societies in which I moved," he writes. "I was the companion of seamen, chimney-sweeps and thieves"; also of harlots, and the flotsam and jetsam of ports.

The company he kept called him "velvet coat", for he adopted at this time the velvet jacket that he considered a good uniform for an author, and which he wore all the rest of his life.

When not in Edinburgh, he spent his vacations wandering about the wildest parts of the Highlands, or about France, accompanied by his cousin, Robert Stevenson (Bob) who was himself a student at the University, and about the same age as Louis.

Robert (who became a painter and journalist in Paris, and later Professor of Fine Arts at Liverpool University) was in his youth almost as remarkable as Louis himself; "The two Stevensons", as they were called, were known all over Edinburgh for their curious pranks and endless jokes. Their conversation, when overheard, was said to be extremely brilliant and amusing to listen to. "The chief

interest of anything that happened was to hear what Louis had to say about it," wrote Robert. "Laughter was at that time our principal affair," said Louis.

Neither of them ever had enough money and would set out on journeys with the vain hope that something as unsaleable, for instance, as a bound volume of Swinburne's poems, could, with sufficient persuasion, be forced on a railway booking-clerk instead of money for a railway fare; or anyhow a volume of Scott. That failing, with the departure of the train imminent in another ten minutes, there would be a rapid opening of a portmanteau; the reckless extraction of some valuable garment, then a dash to the nearest pawnbroker in the town; finally an arrival back at the station just in time to buy the tickets, and jump into the train and be off triumphantly with a little cash over and to spare. Both were very generous with whatever money they possessed and "A foolish spendthrift blaze, and the loving cup going round" was the momentary ideal of the two Stevensons, aged eighteen, for the use of money. Both, however, had "canny" parents, who gave them the most meagre allowances. For this, Stevenson later

in life commended them most thoroughly, for "A poetical youth should always be lived in poverty, and the pleasures of a vagabond youth should be the result of strategy".

It was Louis who inspired their student days. Both were voracious readers of an amazing variety of books; Scottish history and the history of Europe; poetry; the literature of France; Dumas' "D'Artagnan", the *elderly* D'Artagnan of the Vicomte de Braglonne was their hero. "In the company of this champion of chivalry we learnt how to live and how to die."

They were great concert-goers. Beethoven quartets, first heard at Classical concerts in Edinburgh were one of their pleasures. Louis liked ships and often their walks took them to the Port of Leith. He liked poring over maps and charts; he had a passion for hardy adventure; for the highlands; and above all, for the sea.

While journeying or seafaring, by land and sea, in sea craft of all descriptions, with a canoe, with a donkey, or tramping with a knapsack, Stevenson is always at his best.

## HANDICAPS

"Give to me the life I love,  
Let the lave go by me,  
Give me the jolly heaven above,  
And the by-way nigh me.

Louis's parents were generosity itself in that they provided for their only son all that they thought a young man could possibly want. Their house was full of plain comfort and good hospitality; and for his health and education there was nothing they were not ready to do. But two things they would not give him: money and liberty.

After a solemn protest from his father about his long absences and his vagabondage, Louis wrote to him, "You *must* understand that I shall be a nomad more or less until my days be done. You *must* take my nomadic habits as part of me. Just wait till I am in full swing. Take me as I am and give me time, and you will see that I shall pass more of my time with you than elsewhere. I *must* be a bit of a vagabond. It's your own fault after all, isn't it? You shouldn't have had a tramp for a son."

"Unfortunately to a youth with an excitable brain and dainty senses, the interest of his series of experiments grows upon him out of all proportion

to the pleasure he receives," wrote Stevenson, later, of this period of his life; and for all the fun and high spirits of these unquiet and delightful student days, he always spoke of "the wild and bitterly unhappy days of my youth".

Conscious of vague powers and qualities, he longed to get right away, and be his own master. But with the greatest honesty, he felt his own failings, and his utter dependence. "I was pointed out as the very pattern of an idler", and "life, which had not yet even begun, often seemed already at an end, and hope quite dead; and misfortune and dishonour, like physical presences dogging me as I went."

The sound of the bugles from Edinburgh Castle, borne faintly from the distance on the night air, had an unspeakable appeal for him at such despondent moments as if something "yearningly cried to me in the darkness overhead to come hither and find rest."

Already he was no longer an atheist; for at twenty he had come under the influence of the agnostic Professor of Engineering at Edinburgh University, Fleming Jenkin; and had met with a

scepticism deeper than his own; a distrust of scepticism itself. "Certainly the Religious were not right, but certainly not the anti-religious either," and that remained his agnostic point of view for some time now.

At twenty-one it was still taken for granted that Louis would become an engineer. Hence some three years, from twenty-one to twenty-three, after student days, were devoted to apprenticeship. He worked in his father's office in Edinburgh, also he worked in all weathers, in a lighter, or about harbour sides; occasionally going to the bottom of the sea in a diver's suit to watch other engineers at their work, examining the lie of rocks off wild islands and perilous headlands.

He enjoyed the sea life and said he was "cured of any taste for the miserable life of cities." But though he was proud of the family business and thought engineering one of the finest professions, he failed to find the necessary practical interest for lighthouse and bridge building in himself; and then when back from the work that took him out to sea and harbour sides; and returned to his stool in the Edinburgh office again, he found himself clumsy at



accurate measuring and drawing, and his imagination always otherwise pre-occupied and his heart always in his writing. At last in his twenty-third year, one April day, he told his father he wanted to abandon engineering and take to literature in earnest.

Louis's mother said that her husband was "wonderfully resigned", after the first disappointment of this announcement.

Mr. Stevenson, however, firmly stipulated that anyhow "vagabondage" in Edinburgh should now cease. Louis must go to London and there read for the Scottish Bar. If at the same time he succeeded in "Letters" well and good, but he said he dreaded seeing "Failed Author" describe his only son. The long, long arguments, full of disagreements, on Theology and on conduct, that took place between the father and son were utterly wearing to both.

But now this period of youth was ended. Leaving his life in Edinburgh, and the coming of new friends marked a fresh departure; for before making the move to London that had been agreed upon with his father in the summer of 1873, Louis went to stay with some relatives in a Suffolk rectory, and it

was here that he met Colvin who was to become devoted to him, and this friendship brought many others. Sir Sydney Colvin, in his memories and notes of R.L.S. says that he first beheld Louis at the little country railway station where he himself was arriving to join this party.

"I was met by a young man in a velvet jacket who walked up with me to the country rectory where I had come to stay, and where he was staying (our hostess, Mrs. Sitwell, being his cousin)."

It seems that within an hour of his first appearance at the rectory, knapsack on back, a few days earlier, Stevenson's charm had captured the whole household, including a boy of ten, with whom he had made a toy theatre.

"He sped those summer nights and days for all of us, as I have scarce known any sped before or since. Eloquence, grave argument and criticism, riotous freaks of fancy, flashes of nonsense, streamed from him inexhaustibly."

But to Sydney Colvin it soon became clear that under all Stevenson's captivating and infectious gaiety there lay a troubled spirit; he was feeling wretchedly ill and feverish; he was unspeakably

lean, and had a bad cough. Colvin saw that something must be done at once, and he made him come and stay with him in London and see a first-rate doctor.

Acute nervous exhaustion combined with threatening lung symptoms was Sir Andrew Clark's diagnosis of his condition, and grave illness was just staved off by a sojourn all that winter in the south of France.

After a quiet dull uneventful holiday on the Côte d'Azur he returned rested, but from this time onward never again completely sound in health. He now, at last, settled down in London to read for the Bar. He became a member of the Savile Club (Andrew Lang and Colvin having proposed him as a member).

In his "Critical Kitcats", Edmund Gosse gives the following amusing account of his own first meeting with Louis. "After I was introduced to him at the Savile Club, we went downstairs to lunch together and then we adjourned to the smoking-room. As twilight came on, I tore myself away; but Stevenson walked with me across Hyde Park, and nearly to my house. He had an engagement

and so had I, but I walked a mile or two back with him. The fountains of talk had been unsealed and *they drowned the conventions*. I came home dazzled with my new friend, saying, 'Was there ever such a gracious creature born?' "

"Those who have written about him from later impressions than those of which I speak, seem to me to give insufficient prominence to the *gaiety* of Stevenson. It was his cardinal quality in those early days. A childlike mirth leaped and danced in him; he seemed to skip upon the hills of life."

Stevenson, who was no sportsman and no athlete, had nevertheless fair muscular strength, and was also perfectly manly, but he remained too young-looking for his years up to the age of twenty-seven.

"When I try to conjure up his figure I can see only a slight lean lad, in a suit of blue sea cloth, a black shirt, and a wisp of yellow carpet that did duty for a necktie!" Gosse continues amusingly, and it is undeniable that what the latter calls Stevenson's "innocent oddity of attire" and his lank hair worn to the collar of his coat made an unfavourable impression at first sight, during youth; diversity of attire in the British Isles being gener-

ally taken for conceit, rather than merely for an exuberant desire to be expressive and not dull in style. In France the get up of "the artist", even if it is not successful, seems better understood.

"Character! Character! is what Stevenson has," exclaims the author, Mr. Henry James, who was devoted to him, and "his costume is part of the character. He has the vision always of high spirits, and romantic accidents; of a kind of honourable and picaresque career."

"It is a great thing, believe me," Stevenson wrote later, "to present a good normal type of the nation you belong to. . . . I might come from any part of the globe, it seems, except from where I do. . . ." In France, he was sometimes taken for a Frenchman, and at a later date he wrote, "I have found out what is wrong with me—I look like a Pole."

"Since he was eminently human," Gosse says, "I ought to recall Stevenson's faults, but I protest that I can remember none. He was the most unselfish and lovable of human beings; no sick ambition; no envy of others; full of courage; full of kindness and sympathy! In all his movements he was most graceful, and every gesture was full of

unconscious beauty. If he were talking, he was seldom for a moment still, but generally paced restlessly up and down the room, using his hands continually to emphasise what he was saying." Gosse also tells us that Stevenson's speech was distinctly marked with a Scottish intonation that was, in him, very pleasing; and his voice had a surprising strength and resonance even when illness had laid its hand most heavily upon him.

"The whole man was controlled by Scotch good sense and shrewdness," Henry James said again of Louis.

Early in his twenty-sixth year Stevenson wrote, "I clung hard to that entrancing age, but with the best will, no man can be twenty-five for ever," and this sentiment was the prelude to working hard at law; for by the next year, 1877, he had passed all his law examinations and had been called to the Scottish Bar.

He had also written and published by now "New Arabian Nights," Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh," many poems, and innumerable magazine articles. He could always find a publisher but was still, when twenty-seven, only making about £50 a year by his

writing. He was determined to stick to Letters.

In the invalid time, the year before in the south of France, in his dull Côte d'Azur hotel, or in the glittering, yet to him depressing, atmosphere of the Monte Carlo gambling world that had not the slightest attraction for him, "My soul is rarely with me here," was his secret complaint, and "the horror of deadening or losing the soul came upon me."

He said he hated the phrase, "A belief in Life" when that only meant "a cheap lazy satisfaction with the world." Also the argument of the Pessimist that "Nothing matters. It is all very unimportant"—(and from that standpoint and with premeditation, to embark on the life of the immoralist)—seemed to him now "blasphemous, and the very maxim for misuse and sure betrayal of the spirit." *Immediacy* of sin, was its excuse.

From the Café de la Source, Boulevard St. Michel, Paris, on the 1st of Febraury, 1878, Stevenson wrote to his father, "People must be themselves. I feel every day as if religion had a greater interest for me; but that interest is still centred on the little rough and tumbled world in which our fortunes are cast for the moment. I

*cannot* transfer my interests, not even my religious interests, to any different sphere. . . . I have had *some sharp lessons* and some very acute sufferings . . . but I still hope—I still believe; I still see the good in the inch, and cling to it. It is not much perhaps, but it is always something. . . . Strange as it may seem to you, everything has, in one way or another, been bringing me a little nearer to what you would like me to be. . . . It is a strange world indeed, but there is a manifest God for those who care to look for Him. This is a very solemn letter for my surroundings in this busy Café; but I had it in my heart to write it, and indeed I was out of humour for anything lighter.” Then as an afterthought he adds: “P.S.—While I am writing gravely, let me say one word more. I have taken a step towards more intimate relations, but *don't* expect too much of me. Try to take me as I am. Usually I hate to speak of what I really feel, to that extent that when I find myself ‘cornered’ I have a tendency to say the reverse!”

Probably nothing short of dogmatic orthodoxy would have given entire satisfaction to Mr. Stevenson, but at least he was convinced at last that his son



had a fine character and a marked and unchanging individuality. Louis made no attempt at practising at the Bar and the next years were spent in working in Paris, and in wanderings in South Germany (there writing "Will o' the Mill"), and about France.

He often had a cough and was growing more and more gaunt and lean, yet no definite illness had declared itself. He lived a hardy life and was absorbed in writing essays, tales and fantasies.

He was fond of going away to work in France; and after he had spent some time about the glittering streets of Paris, to repair to the woods of Fontainebleau, and at Siron's Inn at Barbizon, close near the aisles of the Forest, would often take up his abode for a few weeks at a time.

In the early eighties he tells us, "young and serious painters, writers and sculptors sojourned here, and in the high inn chamber, where all supped, lit by candles guttering in the night air, the talk and laughter sounded far into the night."

Among women painters working in Fontainebleau Forest that year was Fanny Osbourne from California. She had come away to Europe from

that distant country, her domestic happiness having broken up and come to an end. Now, in Paris, she sought to educate a daughter of seventeen and a little son, Lloyd Osbourne, and devote herself to Art. She had a character almost as strong and romantic as Stevenson's own. She was placid yet alert and vivacious. She was dark, small of stature; her features clear cut and delicate, yet slightly masculine (her profile was said to resemble that of Napoleon). Stevenson fell in love with Fanny Osbourne, and October in Fontainebleau Forest passed happily away. But she was ten years older than himself; though life with her husband had come to an end, she was still legally a married woman; she had hardly any money, and she had two children. Stevenson himself was far from earning an income for two; moreover his health was in a precarious state. His parents would never consent to help on a marriage that must be preluded by divorce. Could circumstances appear more hopeless? For the present any idea of a union was impossible. After the happy autumn, she and Louis parted in a sad uncertainty and with the possibility of never meeting again.

At first, after Mrs. Osbourne had gone away, he continued to lead his life as if nothing had happened. He worked as hard as possible, and produced at this time the "Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes."

Romantic thoughts pursued him, however, as he tramped by streams and mountain ways. "I heard a woman singing some sad old endless ballad, not far off," runs a passage in "The Travels". "It seemed to be about love, and a 'bel amoureux', her sweetheart, and I wished that I could have taken up the strain and answered her, as I went upon my invisible woodland way; my own thoughts with hers. What could I have told her? Little enough. How the world gives and takes away, and brings sweethearts near only to separate them again into distant and strange lands."

By July, when he returned to Edinburgh, his mind was made up. He would go to California, and as soon as Mrs. Osbourne herself was free, they would be married. It seemed so hopeless to expect his parents to be pleased, that he did not even consult them. He left them without a word and without giving them an address to write to; hardly realizing the distress he would cause.

Gosse says that all his friends were violently against Louis's going to California, "but a streak of strong obstinacy lay hidden somewhere in his gentle nature and he scraped together enough to secure him a steerage passage across the Atlantic."

As it turned out later, they were wrong and he was right, but in the circumstances their opinion seemed the only right one; for they had seen that Stevenson's health had by his twenty-eighth year become lamentably bad. He never complained and was so bored by caution against getting ill that in these youthful days, unless he was positively forced to give in and go to bed, he always ignored the fact of his delicacy. Gosse says, "A pathos was given to his own gaiety by the obvious frailty he now showed and which made his friends anxious." Go to South America, however, he would.

In "Across the Plains" we find the account of his journey that he now set out on. By steerage passage, and by train, he journeyed to New York, and on to San Francisco, amongst others, making for America's "Roaring impromptu cities, full of gold, and lust, and death."

He was travelling with emigrants from all parts

of the world. From Chinamen to Cornish miners, they were all packed close. Home sickness was the dominant note rather than hope, "the fear overtaking each one that there was no El Dorado anywhere; and till one could emigrate to the moon it might have been as well to stop patiently at home."

The strain of the last few days of the long close journey from New York to San Francisco were almost unbearable, in the state of illness into which on the journey Stevenson fell. When he reached San Francisco he seemed almost wasted to a spectre and he spoke like one in a dream. In the cheap hotel where he took up his abode, "the Author" (as Stevenson heard a child call him) was looked upon by an American journalist who happened to be staying there, "as a strange, fierce, yet pathetic invalid who ought not to be alone, but who seemed too aloof and wrapped in his own thoughts to be approached."

The news of Mrs. Osbourne was that she too had been very ill, but was better; that her undefended divorce was being brought about, but it would probably be a long time before Stevenson could

see her. This to him was a great disappointment. He now made for getting out of San Francisco (picturesque and dangerous enough to suit his fancy but expensive to live in), to the old Spanish Mexican town of Monterey to get to work on literature as soon as he could.

But on the journey there, suddenly while on horseback, he was seized with hæmorrhage, and then was left so weak while camping out by himself, that he thought he must die. Overcome with languor he felt resigned to death. "I scarcely ate or slept or thought for four days," he said. "Two nights I lay out under a tree, in a sort of stupor, doing nothing but fetch water for myself and horse, light a fire and make coffee, then fall into a sleep once again."

Fortunately he was rescued at last by a rancher who was passing by on his horse, who carried him to his Angora goat farm, and with the greatest kindness nursed him till he recovered.

"I am now lying in an upper chamber with a clinking of goat bells in my ears. The old hunter is infusing tea . . . and in a few minutes Tom the Indian will come in with his gun."

Stevenson stayed two weeks on the farm in a convalescent state, passing the mornings in teaching the rancher's children to read.

But the funds he had brought with him were by now almost exhausted and unless he must appeal again to his parents he was dependent upon writing. Thus, when he was at last sufficiently patched up in health, he left the ranch to go down and take up his abode in Monterey. Here he worked harder than he had ever worked before; so important was it to secure the earnings from his pen, that after endless delays through distance, he would at last receive from time to time by post.

"A Vendetta in the West," and "The Pavilion on the Links" were soon despatched home, and later the "Amateur Emigrant" and an article on Thoreau in the "Cornhill".

He finally went back to San Francisco in the hope of getting journalistic work, and lodged there amongst working folk in the cheapest lodgings he could find. He knew no one, and had no one to speak to but friendly waiters in restaurants and his good landlady.

Although his spirit was indomitable, his physical

powers were now once more completely exhausted. His landlady's child was very ill and to give its mother a rest he sat up nursing it through the crisis of its illness. The child recovered, but Stevenson a short while afterwards took to his bed and could go on no more. He was on the verge of galloping consumption, subject to fever and cold sweats, prostrating attacks of coughing, and sinking fits in which he lost the power of speech.

He very nearly died in lodgings and in loneliness. At last the doctor summoned Fanny Osbourne and directly she heard of Stevenson's illness she came off to nurse him.

In his relief at her arrival the patient rallied and revived and at last "came out of the wood". Fanny made no question that taking care of his health, should he not get well again, was what she most wished to do for the rest of Stevenson's life; then a telegram arrived from old Mr. Stevenson in Edinburgh saying Louis was to count on £250 a year from him in future. The wonderful climate of California with its warm sun and azure sky, and his engagement, brought Louis a very happy convalescence. He would be married as soon as he had strength enough for the occasion.



"It was a considerable shock to my pride to break down," wrote Stevenson, "but there, it is done, and cannot be helped. Had my health held out another month I should have made another year's income, but breaking down when I did, I am surrounded by unfinished works. It is a good thing my father was so on the spot, or I should have had to work and die."

In the spring of 1880 he was pronounced well enough for his wedding, and on May 19th of that year, at the age of thirty, Robert Louis Stevenson was married to Fanny van De Grift (the maiden name of Mrs. Osbourne) in the house of a Presbyterian minister at San Francisco.

Sir Sidney Colvin says of the marriage, "It need only be said that from the beginning to the end, husband and wife were all in all to one another. She was the staunch companion of all his adventures very stimulating to his work, and in sickness, despite her own precarious health, the most devoted and efficient of nurses. She shared all Stevenson's gipsy tastes and love of primitive modes of life."

Stevenson's father and mother were distressed at all their sick son had gone through without their

help and were now longing for nothing so much as to make amends, and they begged Louis to bring his wife home to Edinburgh. Thus, in August, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Louis Stevenson and Louis's young stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, a boy of ten, left South America and sailed for Liverpool.

So much were his parents satisfied with Fanny after the arrival, that it was now as if it was they, and not Louis himself, who had made the match; and Stevenson's return to his Scottish home after his immense and anxious expedition to California to fetch his wife, was a happy one.

Louis had been so buoyant in spirit that up till now, each time he was seized with illness he thought it was possibly the last attack, and that he would go forward again in fair health. He had as yet formed no plan for shaping his life to that of an invalid's.

That summer he travelled about the Highlands, with delight showing all that he loved in his adored Scotland to his wife. Unfortunately Sir Andrew Clark considered him quite unfit to face a Scottish winter; he must be off with the migrating birds; and accordingly he hurriedly fled from the Highlands to Switzerland.

"A mountain valley, an Alpine winter and an invalid's weakness make up among them a prison of the most effective kind," wrote Stevenson, rather lugubriously, on arrival at Davos. He had just taken up quarters with his wife and his stepson, and a black Skye terrier in one of the hotels. But fortunately the tingling air and sparkling sun soon improved health and made for contentment. The great feature of the place for him was the presence of John Addington Symonds who himself had come to Davos as a tuberculous invalid. "I saw Symonds this morning, and already like him; it is such sport to have a literary man around . . . eternal interests in the same topics, eternal cross-causeway of special knowledge. That makes hours to fly," Stevenson writes, and J. A. Symonds in his turn, describing the companionship of Stevenson, says, "So gracious and so pure a light has never fallen upon my path as fell from his fantastic and yet intensely human genius—the beautiful companionship of the Shelley-like man, the eager gifted wife, and the boy for whom they thought in all their ways and hours."

Tobogganning had actually only just come in as a

fashionable delight in the year 1880, and was a new sensation at Davos; yet surely the following pre-  
"Winter Sports" account from Stevenson's pen fits the thrill of skimming the snow, for all time.

"Perhaps the true way to toboggan is alone and at night. First comes the tedious climb, dragging your instrument behind you. Next a long breathing space, alone with snow and pine woods, cold, silent, and solemn to the heart. Then you push off; the toboggan fetches way; one begins to feel the hill, to glide, to swim, to gallop. In a breath you are out from under the pine trees, and a whole heaven full of stars reels and flashes overhead. Then comes a vicious effort; for by this time your wooden steed is speeding like the wind and you are spinning round a corner, and the whole glittering valley and all the lights in all the great hotels lie for a moment at your feet; and the next you are racing once more in the shadow of the night, with close shut teeth and beating heart. Yet a little while and you will be landed on the high road by the door of your own hotel. This, in an atmosphere tingling with forty degrees of frost in a night made luminous with stars and snow, and girt with strange

white mountains, teaches the pulse an unaccustomed tune, and adds a new excitement to the life of man upon this planet."

Louis had written to his parents that he and his wife would reach Scotland from Davos again by May (1881) and said that he hoped to find "A house, not an inn, at least not an hotel. A burn within reach, and heather. If these can be combined, I shall be pretty happy."

At Kinnaird Cottage, Pitlochry, just these things fortunately were found in a little green glen "with a burn, a wonderful burn, gold and green and snow white, singing loud and low in different steps of its career, now pouring over miniature crags, now fretting itself to death in a maze of rocky stairs. Never was so sweet a little river! Behind, great purple moorlands."

At Pitlochry, he wrote his romance of the sea, "The Merry Men", that story of a wild storm on a lonely Scottish Island, and of treacherous rocks, and a heavy surf rolling into a bay that "told of nothing but dead mariners and sea disaster."

The story opens with the finding of a shoe buckle (eighteenth century) in deep water in the cold

light of moonlight, in this place; and Stevenson's hero is at once stirred at the thought of "the very foot that had once worn that buckle and trod so much along the decks! The whole human fact of him as a creature like myself, with hair, and blood, and seeing eyes!"

Sir Walter Raleigh says that Stevenson's success in his romances of the sea, of boyhood, of Scotland, is due to his direct appeal to "the blood" to "all that dim instinct of danger, mystery and sympathy in things that is man's oldest inheritance!"

Next in August, 1881, in his thirty-first year in a house at Braemar where were assembled a summer holiday party, consisting of his wife and stepson and Mother and Father, with visitors coming and going (Sidney Colvin and Gosse among them) Louis embarked on "Treasure Island".

"On a chill September morning by the cheek of a brisk fire and with the rain drumming on the window I began 'The Sea Cook', for that was the original title," writes Stevenson. He declared that he invented the story to please his schoolboy step-son, Lloyd, who asked him "to try and write something interesting!" Piqued by this, he set out

to do his best, and taking fire, by October already nineteen chapters were completed.

"I liked the tale myself for much the same reason as my Father liked the beginning. *It was my kind of picturesque.* I was not a little proud of John Silver: and to this day rather admire that smooth and formidable adventurer. What was infinitely more exhilarating, I had passed a landmark. I had finished a tale and written 'THE END' upon my MSS. as I had not done since I had written 'The Pentland Rising' when a boy of sixteen. The tale seems to have given much pleasure and it brought (or was the means of bringing) fire, food and wine to a deserving family in which I took an interest, I need scarcely say I mean my own."

All the visitors staying in the house heard snatches of the story of "Treasure Island" as it was written and read aloud, chapter by chapter. They were the first who ever heard of:

"Fifteen men on the dead man's chest,  
Yo, ho, ho! and a bottle of rum!

and to hear that "Drink and the devil had done for the rest"; and the first to have their imaginations stirred by the tap! tap! tap! of blind Pugh's stick

on the high road, approaching the Admiral Benbow Inn.

At the end of September the weather grew suddenly bad at Braemar, and Stevenson once more was obliged to make a hurried flight via London and Paris to Davos. He and his wife and his stepson, Lloyd, were to spend the winter there again; but this year in a chalet of their own, instead of in an hotel.

Fortunately the inspiration that had flowed while writing "Treasure Island" and had been interrupted by his rapid journey from Scotland to Switzerland, returned. The last fourteen chapters took but a fortnight, and at the second wave the book was finished as easily as it was begun. "Treasure Island," by Captain George North, was then buried as an obscure serial in the pages of "Young Folks".

It did not make its appearance as a book until two years later in November, 1884, in Stevenson's thirty-fourth year. He had revised and bettered the story and added a good map, and now it immediately had a popular success. The book was everywhere declared to be the best adventure story since "Robinson Crusoe".



So little was Stevenson used, for all his writing, to expecting to make any money to speak of by his pen, that a year before the book appeared, in a letter to his father he had written in high spirits, "How much do you suppose I have been offered for the book rights of "Treasure Island?" How much do you suppose?—well, a hundred pounds all alive Oh! A hundred jingling, tingling, golden-minted quid! Is not this wonderful?"

"Treasure Island" that has been read by boys of all nations, that has been dramatised and filmed, and become a classic, brought the author himself certainly £2,000 in all before he died, but not a penny more. The Merchant Prince of literature, however, was a figure that had not as yet arrived in the world.

Though a slow and laborious writer, Stevenson adored the practise of his art.

His friend, Sir Walter Raleigh, says, "All his life he was singularly free from the vanity of fame," and Gosse speaks of Stevenson's "energetic modesty".

"I work, work away, and get nothing or but little, done," or "It is slow, slow, slow; but I sit from four to five hours at it," is his own news of

his writing to his Mother in a letter from Davos.

Then again, "I dawdle on the balcony, read and write and have fits of conscience and indigestion. The ingenious human mind, face to face with something it downright ought to do—*does something else!* But the relief is temporary!"

Then later, "I am getting a slow, steady, sluggish stream of ink over paper, and shall do better this year than last."

He said that artists were apt to forget that the end of art is to *please*. "Curiosity" was the only receipt by which he himself worked; this, and the task of entertaining his reader.

The romance of boyhood Stevenson had the power to give to boys. Then the soldier, the sailor, the Scotch shepherd, the physician it was his hope to entertain; for among these professions, in his experience, there were always men who stood out above the common herd, and to whom he would be proud to have appealed.

He had always the power of being a boy again at will. In that power surely lay the genius that produced "Treasure Island" and "Kidnapped".

All his life he loved cannibals and pirates and

toys and games, and Lloyd Osbourne (who later as we know became an author himself and collaborated with his stepfather in adventure stories) writes: "Louis brought a boy's eagerness, a man's intellect and a novelist's imagination, into the Christmas holidays, when I was a boy at Davos. The tin soldiers most took his fancy, and the 'war game' was constantly improved and elaborated until finally 'a war' took weeks to play and the critical operations in the attic monopolised half our thoughts. This attic was a most chilly and dismal spot reached by a crazy ladder, and unlit save for a single frosted window. A large map was drawn out upon the floor in chalks of different colours, with mountains, rivers, towns, bridges and roads of two classes. Here we would play by the hour with tingling fingers and stiffening knees and with an intentness, zest and excitement that I shall never forget, as the mimic battalions marched and counter-marched. It was war in miniature even to the making and destruction of bridges, the entrenching of camps; good and bad weather with corresponding influence on the roads . . . and an exacting commissariat added the last touch of verisimilitude."

When laid up in bed Louis painted, and modelled figures in wax, and at the age of thirty-two, in those gramophoneless and lack-wireless days, was composing music for a penny whistle, and explaining that he "has always some childishness on hand". Hobbies succeeded each other. "I dote on wood engraving. I've an amusement at last!" he exclaims in a letter.

He never kept any animals but a dog or a pony; and "There is only one sort of bird that I can tolerate caged, though that I think hard, and that is what is called in France 'the Bec d'Argent'," he wrote, describing how he at least once possessed two tiny birds. "Their song was not much louder than a bee's, but airily musical, and kept one in a perfect good humour. I put the cage upon the table when I worked; carried it with me when I went for meals, and kept it by my head at night; the first thing in the morning these mæstrini would pipe up."

Chess and patience and picquet he played all his life. Maps of all kinds he delighted in (for he had that "geographical sense" which in his own words "feels the width of the world, delights in sky and

sea, and the broad stretch of land; and in every place is aware of its relation to other places").

Military history and campaigns always absorbed him, and the last weeks at Davos were spent reading Sir Edward Hamley's "Operations of War".

"If anyone imagines that Stevenson's cheerfulness was produced by his own easy feelings of well being" or "by being embarked in the cockboat of his own prosperity," as Walter Raleigh in a lecture given in 1895 says, "they do him an injustice."

A tuberculous temperature, apart from the violent seizures of illness, produced certainly at moments what Louis describes as "a kind of heady jollity," yet with that, "a consciousness of an underlying languor and aching weariness," and he says he often suffered from "a peevish temper which must be controlled."

Davos had done Stevenson good, but his summers in Scotland invariably undid the benefit.

He was so ill with hæmorrhages in the summer of 1882 that he and his wife decided they must now stay away from the British Isles for some years. Only one last month was allowed in Scotland, at Kingussie; and here again by a burn, "the golden

burn that pours and sulks"—he spent the last days of the Scotch summer, and the last he ever passed in Scotland.

"The tragic folly of my summers in Scotland are at an end for me. The next time, if I come back, it would only be to leave my bones with a general verdict of 'serve him right for a fool'. The white cliffs of Albion shall not see me. I am sick of relapsing. I want to get well."

But alas! the first news after going abroad to the south of France is of several hæmorrhages and of mending very slowly. By Christmas he wrote, "I had to give up wood engraving, chess, latterly even patience, and could read almost nothing but newspapers. It was dull but necessary," and then, later, of finding it impossible to work more than three or four hours at a time.

At last, however, at Hyères by February, 1883, he grew much better. He was delighted with the sunny little wooden house his wife had found for him, "Chalet la Solitude," with its quiet garden and "view like a classical landscape". Here he found a greater peace and happiness than ever came again except perhaps at moments. "I was only

happy once, that was at Hyères," he said later. "Pleasure of course I have known, but not happiness."

By March, after settling in, he wrote, "My wife is in pretty good feather, I love her better than ever; admire her more, and I cannot think what I have done to deserve so good a gift. She is everything to me; wife, brother, sister, daughter and dear companion, and I would not change her to get a goddess or a saint."

At Hyères he finished "Prince Otto," wrote "The Silverado Squatters" and "The Black Arrow", which last, however, was a complete failure with the public. He describes it himself at the time as "Tushery".

Sidney Colvin and other friends came to stay at Hyères and all enjoyed wonderfully good talk at the "Chalet la Solitude".

But at last the happy tranquil days were rudely disturbed. An expedition was made to Nice and there, in his hotel, he became dangerously ill. "At a consultation of doctors, I was told there was no hope," wrote his wife, "and I had better send for some member of the family to be with me at the

end. Bob Stevenson came and he helped me to nurse Louis, and he kept me from despair.

"I survived when a stronger man would not," Stevenson wrote afterwards. "That is all over and I have only weakness to contend against. I am told to regard myself as an old man, and to 'sit by the fire', and leave off wine, none of which I wish to do," said Stevenson.

This illness, however, marked the beginning of a long period of extreme anxiety about him for his wife, for no sooner was he back at Hyères, in the first week of May than he was attacked with the most violent and dangerous hæmorrhage he had ever experienced. It occurred late at night, but in a moment she was by his side. Being choked and unable to speak, he made signs to her for a paper and pencil and wrote in a neat hand, "Don't be frightened. If this is death it is an easy one". Mrs. Stevenson had always a small bottle of ergotin and a measure glass in readiness; these she brought in order to administer the prescribed quantity. Seeing her alarm he took bottle and glass away from her, measured the dose with a perfectly steady hand and gave the things back to



her. Then and only then he lay back exhausted.

Recovery this time was very slow and attended by two painful complications, those of sciatica and ophthalmia. When the ophthalmia began on top of everything else, Mrs. Stevenson felt that it was more than anyone could be expected to bear and she went into another room to hide her gloom. She recounts that Louis rang his bell and she went to him saying satirically in the bitterness of her spirit as she entered the room, "Well, I suppose this is the very best thing that could have happened".

"Why how odd!" wrote Louis on a piece of paper, "I was just going to say those very words."

From that time forward he lived always in the expectation of death coming to him at any time; and during the next convalescence he once more renewed his resolution to endeavour to make the best of it to the last; and as far as lay in his power, not to let sickness interfere with leading the life of a strenuous artist—fail as he knew he often must.

"The business of life however appears to be not to succeed, but to continue to fail in good spirits,"

he wrote; and he thought, "Here lies one who tried a little and failed much," or "There goes one of life's faithful failures" were epitaphs of which no man need feel ashamed.

Truly Stevenson took seriously what so few religious people seem to find important to take seriously, the Christian message to "Rejoice and be exceeding glad."

Perplexed as to where to go next to live the complete invalid life that was now emphatically enjoined upon him, he and his wife obeyed the doctor and came back to England to try a winter at Bournemouth. Louis always said, "Any place is good enough to live a life in, while it is only in a few, and those, highly favoured, that we can pass a few hours agreeably," By the spring, the climate having so far agreed with him, the Stevensons had decided to settle down with all their own occupations, in a dull, yellow brick, ivy-clad Bournemouth villa, with heather in the garden, and a ravine full of rhododendrons. Here they stayed three years. They called the house "Skerryvore" (after the most difficult of all the lighthouses engineered by the family).

Almost at once, after they were settled, Stevenson took up his work. He wrote with a blotting-pad against his knees, as he sat up against his pillows in bed, and it seems astonishing that in the next three years in spite of recurring attacks of illness he managed to produce (besides plays in collaboration with W. E. Henley and "A Child's Garden of Verses")—first, "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" and then "Kidnapped," two of his best books.

"I don't believe there was ever such a literary feat performed as the writing of 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde'," says Lloyd Osbourne. "Louis came downstairs in a fever; he had been about four days working on his first draft, but he read nearly half the book aloud, and then while we were still gasping, he was away again and busy writing.

"This achievement roused and cheered him inexpressibly." Then immediately after, "Kidnapped" was begun in March, 1883 (his thirty-fifth year) and finished in five months.

He himself thought that book the best, and most human work he had yet done. "In this book and in this only, the characters took the bit in their teeth. My task was stenographic. It was they who spoke:

it was they who wrote the story," Stevenson said. Then, just within sight of the end, he was ill again and inspiration failed. "I put the last chapters together without interest or inspiration, almost word for word."

The book was hurried away to the publishers. It at once had a great success.

What had Stevenson not already by now written? Travels of adventure, of character, including "Treasure Island," short stories and essays of all kinds, history and biography, fables, and moralities, and treatises of ethics, poems, lyrics, ballads and songs, poetry for children, plays, novels and lay sermons; yet more was to come. Writing to George Meredith, a few years later, Stevenson says, "For years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary, and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed and written out of it, written in hæmorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my head swam for weakness, and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now; still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress."

"And the battle goes on, ill or well is a trifle; so as it goes. I was made for a contest and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this dingy inglorious one of bed and the physic bottle."

One of the advantages of Bournemouth was that Stevenson was able to have short visits from his many friends who came to his bedside, and had amusing talks or played chess with him.

Sargent, who as yet was only on the eve of fame, painted his portrait in his velvet jacket, and propped against his pillows. Colvin came constantly. Hensley collaborated with him in plays. Henry James had many talks; they were always gay together and got on extremely well.

"Stevenson, I do not see you precisely as a man of the world, but as a Scotchman of the world!" the latter once amusingly exclaimed.

1887 was a languid year quite unprovocative of any work. For many months he was weighed down by depression; life's ugliest side presenting itself to him in imagination. The mystery of life overwhelmed him. Human language giving but allegory, human imagery, human poetry; the meaning of life for ever exceeding the scope of human understand-

ing; and "we have to bear cheerfully with the human limitation."

His family loyalty was deeply rooted and sincere. In spite of their early quarrels he had greatly loved his father who had now died. His mother had all her days been part of his life. His wife and his stepson, Lloyd, were now bound up with him. Presently they were joined by Lloyd's sister, Mrs. Strong, and her young boy of eight years old.

Together they made up a little clannish family that remained together till the end of Stevenson's days.

He—who was often stern with himself, and practised what he preached—demanded almost as much of those nearest to him as of himself.

Some of his own convictions that he imparted to his family were:

"Noble disappointments, noble self-denials are not to be admired if they bring bitterness."

"Gentleness and cheerfulness, these come before everything; they are the perfect duties," and

"Make yourself good, make others happy."

"I think the Crier up has a good trade; but I like less and less every year the berth of *runner down*;

and I hate to see my friends at it. What is ——'s fault? That he runs down; *forgetting the real success*. What is the easiest thing to do? to run down—and I am horrified to find that I myself fall into this same business which I abhor in others."

Finally, "to seek contentment, but not to expect happy endings."

All this family were contented coming and going in the house, and serving his literary life in various ways. They all declared they would follow him to the end of the earth, and this vow they were presently to carry out. The patient seemed to be doing very badly in the year 1887, and he had begun to chafe at the invalid life he led at Bournemouth. "To exist on tepid milk, and by regulating the warmth of your parlour, in fear of getting ill," he despised. He liked life to be cheerfully hazarded, and said it was the sort of man who did that, who kept his pulses going true and fast. "If only I could secure a violent death what a fine success! I wish to die in my boots; no more land of counterpane for me! To be drowned, to be shot, to be thrown from a horse—aye, to be hanged, rather than pass through this slow dissolution!"

Once more a change of climate was suggested for the restless patient; this time by the Bourne-mouth doctor. He prescribed a voyage.

This was felt as the greatest relief at "Skerryvore". At once the whole party decided to set forth on far and adventurous travels; it would be a nice change for the invalid from travels "from the blue bed to the brown".

By the middle of July, 1887, their tickets were taken to New York, and "Skerryvore" was let. To his closest friends Stevenson bade good-bye; a last farewell as it, in fact, proved for all, since he never saw any one of them, or England or Scotland again. "In one way or another life forces men apart and breaks up the goodly fellowship for ever," and he himself was now to become "no more than a name, a reminiscence, and an occasional crossed letter, laborious to read."

Choosing a moment when Stevenson was well, and there seemed no danger of hæmorrhage, the party of four—mother, son, wife and stepson—sailed for New York, embarking on the steamship "Ludgate Hill".

The diary of Stevenson's mother contains an



entry highly characteristic both of herself and of her son. "We discovered that the 'Ludgate Hill' is a cattleship . . . and agreed to look upon it as an adventure, and make the best of it."

Stevenson did not allow the discomfort to affect him. Nor did Fanny (with her devotion to a Crusoe-ing existence). On the contrary, he himself discovered that "there is no joy in the Universe compared to life on a villainous ocean tramp, rolling through a horrible sea in company with a cargo of cattle!"

"I have got one good thing out of my sea voyage; it is proved the sea agrees heartily with me, and my mother likes it: so if I get any better, or no worse, my mother will doubtless hire a schooner (when we get to America) for a month or so in the summer. Good Lord! What fun! Wealth is only useful for two things; a yacht and a string quartette. For these two I will sell my soul.

"I was so happy on board that ship, I could not have believed it possible. We had the beastliest weather, and many discomforts, but the mere fact of its being a tramp ship gave us many comforts. We could cut about with the men and officers, stay

in the wheelhouse, discuss all manner of things, and really be a little at sea. And truly there is nothing else!

"I had literally forgotten what happiness was, and the full mind, full of external and physical things, not full of cares and labours and rot about a fellow's behaviour. My heart literally sang; I care for nothing so much as for that."

"Treasure Island" and also "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (which had just now run as a successful play in New York) had brought Stevenson fame in America, and on arrival in New York he was "besieged by reporters", as the saying is, of all authors of repute; and apparently, truly, in his case, for some hours. "The New York World" offered him a sum of about £2,000 for writing an article every week for a year (or what roughly amounted in dollars to £40 an article). This he refused. He preferred to work in his own way and on his own lines. He thought that he could count now as long as he lived on about £2000 annually. He was certain he would accomplish fresh work every year, as long as he lived; for literary work, in spite of the strain of it, remained always the very

breath of life to him. His father had already made Mrs. Osbourne and Lloyd heirs to the small capital he had left Louis; and his mother had an independent income left her by her husband. It seemed to Louis he had ample means even on the new and more expensive continent.

Hitherto he had always just tossed his writing off to various publishers, accepting their terms, whatever they might be. But he now just at this point, from New York, wisely put all his literary affairs into the hands of a careful Scotch solicitor. This was Mr. Charles Baxter of Edinburgh, with whom Stevenson corresponded a great deal, always in the broadest Scotch.

The time in New York after arrival was spent chiefly with old American friends in an entirely unworldly fashion, and also as was to be expected, several days had to be taken in bed. One afternoon was spent on a seat in Washington Square having a long enjoyable talk with Mark Twain.

The decision now was to leave for Saranac, on the Canadian border, where there was a sanatorium for tubercular patients. Mrs. Louis Stevenson went on ahead into Canada to buy furs, and the

rest of the party followed. Saranac was found to be glacially cold, thirty degrees below zero, and the climate and the lack of comfort proved very trying to all except Louis, who thrived fairly well. Arrayed in a buffalo coat, astrakhan cap and Indian boots, he got out every day and skated. Here he wrote "The Ebb Tide" and "The Wrong Box" in collaboration with Lloyd Osbourne, who by now, having arrived at manhood, had taken to literature himself.

"My work came in just as his energy flagged," wrote Lloyd, "and vice versa, and he liked my applause when he, as he always did, pulled us magnificently out of sloughs. In a way I was well fitted to help him. I was a kodaker. He was an artist and a man of genius."

At the end of the winter Stevenson decided that the climate of Saranac was quite too hard on his family. Very perversely all of them were ill, while he himself, the usual invalid, had accumulated a certain store of strength. What was to be done next? He then brought forth plans, exciting and heartening to them all since, while they sat shivering over fires inadequate to a temperature thirty

degrees below zero, "the South," "warm, sunny seas," and "tropical islands" were envisaged. "Why should they not charter a schooner? It would cost no more than a country house for them all to live in. He had always found himself able to work in a ship's cabin.

After that, all the rest of the evenings at Saranac were spent in planning a yachting cruise.

The family finally decided upon taking their schooner, when found, to the Pacific and the South Sea Islands. His wife left Saranac for California on a visit to her people, and she was told to "have a look round for craft, in San Francisco".

Capable as she always was, she soon found a possible schooner. A telegram arrived saying that the yacht "Casco" might be hired for a trip among the islands of the South Seas, and Stevenson telegraphed back to her to secure it. By the 7th of June, 1887, Stevenson himself had reached California. "The 'Casco' of course was the first question, and it was a busy time." She was found to be "a fore and aft schooner, ninety-five feet in length, of seventy tons burden." "With her lofty masts, white sails and decks and glittering brass work, she

was a lovely craft to the eye as she sat like a bird upon the water."

The owner, Dr. Merrett, Californian millionaire, was at first most hesitating about the whole affair, and without having seen him, displayed the greatest distrust of Stevenson.

An interview took place, and all difficulties vanished. "I'll go ahead now with the yacht," said the Doctor. "I'd read things in the papers about Stevenson and thought he was a kind of crank; but he's a plain sensible man that knows what he's talking about, just as well as I do."

They engaged the skipper and the cook and a crew of four deck hands—these were three Swedes "and the inevitable Finn". Stevenson himself, who already now was ill again in San Francisco, was anxious to begin with a long voyage, saying he counted on the warm sea air to do him good, and if on the other hand, it was to be death, he wished it to be so far away from land that burial at sea should be certain. He already knew a great deal about the islands and the climate; and to sail to, they chose the Marquesas of the South Sea Island group.

Sir Graham Balfour writes, "At last on June 26th,

1888, the party took up their quarters in the 'Casco' and at the dawn of the 28th she was towed outside 'the golden gate', and headed for the south across the long swell of the Pacific.

"So with his household, Stevenson sailed away beyond the sunset; and America, like Europe, was to see him no more. The 'Casco' steered a course of three thousand miles across the open sea to the Marquesas."

From that day forward Louis and his family wandered about the South Seas, to the Hawaii Islands and the Gilberts, Tahiti and Samoa (his future home), and all the time it may truly be said, often in a state of rapture.

"This climate; these voyagings; these landfalls at dawn; new islands peaking from the morning bank; new forested harbours; new passing alarms of squalls and surf; new interests of seeing the natives—the whole tale of my life is better to me than any poem!" he wrote home.

"At night the constellations of diamonds, each infinitesimally small and all shining together in heaven like some old-fashioned clasp . . . the flying fish, a shining silver rain on the blue sea . . . a

turtle fast asleep in the early morning sunshine.

"The tall, fine copper-coloured race, the Polynesians. The strange outlandish little adventures, such as the meeting with the Vaekeha, the refined and aged queen of the Marquesas converted to Roman Catholicism and spending a devout old age, after a youth of cannibalism." This queen of cannibals was tattooed from head to foot. "She had been passed from chief to chief," writes Stevenson, "fought for and taken in war, and now out of that past of violence and sickening feasts behold her step forth a quiet, deaf, elaborate old lady, such as you might find at home in a score of country houses. Her mittens were tattooed and were not of silk, and had been paid for, not in money, but the cooked flesh of men. It came into my mind to wonder if she regretted her barbarous and stirring past. But when I asked her son, 'Ah!' said he. 'She is content; she is now religious, she passes all her days with the nuns'."

The landscape, the seascape, the dangerous squalls, the trade winds, the sea shells, the calms, are to be found in Stevenson's record "In the South Seas" or in Sir Alan Johnson's "Stevenson in the South Seas".



Meanwhile every day he worked hard for several hours in his cabin.

"The Master of Ballantrae" was written to "the tune of slatting canvas" or in "star-reflecting harbours" with an industry and detachment from his surroundings that would only be broken by squalls.

Tropical blue sky and seascape were shut out of his mind at will, and, in imagination, while engaged on a book, he could quite easily transport himself to eighteenth-century Scotland, to a frosty night in mid-winter.

The news of the ship herself it must be said, was that "silently and deeply" she was rolling, or she was "staggering in that business falsely called a calm"; and the next "She is in the assault of a squall"; then, "the inhabitants of the cabin are piled up one upon another, the sea pouring into the cockpit, and the steersman spinning the wheel for his life, in the tropical rain; three or four of these squalls in a week."

"It is like walking the tight rope, so constant is the care required."

The South Seas, twenty-five years later, for a short period, became fashionable for fast American steamers, and steam yachts, going on luxury cruises;

the passengers landing at the uncivilized points with their gramophones and beach paraphernalia, and even with "cocktail bars for the beach"—feeling very "savage", with hibiscus flowers manufactured in Honolulu behind their ears, sending home bathing snapshots of themselves to the society papers. But fifty years ago, the Stevensons making their first landing after twenty-two days at sea, had sighted no vessel on the way. "The Pacific is absolutely desert," he writes. They were far from the track of commerce; and should they founder or leak, far from any hand of help.

Some nine months later when making at the time for Honolulu (even then, the most important and civilized harbour in the South Seas) the overdue "Casco" was given up as lost.

"We were drifting here and there for a week. We nearly starved. . . . When we went to bed, we could just see the lights in Honolulu and then when we rose in the morning, found ourselves not nearer but further out," Lloyd Osbourne writes; and this youth, who was enormously enjoying the experience, and immensely proud of the navigation of their yacht, further recounts, "When at last the

weather altered and we got our wind, it was a snoring 'trade', and we ran into the harbour of Honolulu like a steamboat. It was a dramatic entry for the overdue 'Casco'—flashing past buoys and men-o'-war, with the pilot in a panic of alarm. If the 'Casco' ever did thirteen knots, she did it then."

Thus, from 1888 to 1891 Stevenson voyaged about from one group of islands to another. When he landed, if ill, he camped and remained quiet for a few weeks; if well, he rode everywhere about. At the end of the time he was the greatest authority of that day on the South Sea Islands; and it was no inexperienced traveller who now chose Samoa and decided with his wife that there was the spot to be found on which to build themselves a home.

The Samoan group of islands is in fact less beautiful than the Marquesas or Tahiti; but the choice was a practical one; for it had become indispensable to have a regular and trustworthy means of communicating with printer and publisher; and from Samoa there was a mail to Sydney (Australia) once a week, and also frequently to New Zealand, thence home.

Accordingly, on Upolu (Samoa) an island 45 miles long and 11 wide—at Vailima, under Mount Vaea, Stevenson bought 400 acres of ground. Here he had decided to build a house, and make it his home, until he died. "Vailima", as the house was to be called, means "Five Waters", in Samoan, and that number of streams flowed by this heavenly spot.

While he and his wife were camping out just there, under the mountain, in preparation for the settlement, he writes, "The morning is, ah! such a morning as you have surely never seen; heaven upon earth for sweetness, freshness; depth upon depth of unimaginable colour, and a huge silence broken at this moment only by the far-away murmur of the Pacific, and the rich piping of a bird. For the mails, we could of course have settled at Honolulu, but chose Samoa for the simple and eminently satisfactory reason that it is less civilized. Can you not conceive that it is awful fun?

"I am weeding, clearing and path-making. I have had at last to confine myself to the house, or literature must have gone by the board."

While her husband, in their temporary wooden cottage, toiled at "Catriona", the sequel to "Kid-

napped", his wife performed feats as a settler; first getting to know and understand their native retainers and their ways, and setting them to work: clearing, making a plantation, a farm, a garden; securing pigs and cows. A pair of strong New Zealand pack-horses did all their carrying from Apia, the capital. The volcanic soil was marvellous, and bananas, nuts, oranges, guavas and pineapples grew to perfection on the estate. During the settling it must be said there were many troubles. At times the confusion seemed insurmountable. Mrs. Stevenson had violent toothache, then rheumatism. Stevenson got ill at the same time, and a "boy" went raving mad, to his master's anguish. Escaped horses disturbed the night, and wandering pigs were lost. Stevenson's wonderful enthusiasm, however, was infectious. He took the keenest interest himself in all the details of the settlement, and with his direction and Fanny's grit in carrying things through, the homestead soon became a fact. Presently they would be able to move into the house.

Lloyd now returned from England whither he had gone to see to the family affairs, also Steven-

son's publisher; and he had brought with him the Edinburgh family possessions and their furniture.

By 1892, "the house of Vailima"—long, wooden, painted green, with a red roof and a verandah—was ready; and the settlers moved in.

There were three large rooms downstairs, and a large hall; and bedrooms and a library upstairs.

In Stevenson's room there was a small bedstead, a couple of bookcases, a plain deal kitchen-table at which he wrote, and two chairs. One window looked out over the tree-tops to the blue Pacific, the other on to the majestic Mount Vaea. At one side of the room there was a locked rack containing half a dozen colt's rifles in case they should ever be needed. The library was lined with the history of Scotland, military history, and books relating to the Pacific; and a great deal of French literature. That room was a failure for work, as far as Stevenson was concerned.

"I can't write in that library; it is all so suitable for a literary man; it puts every idea out of my head," he announced, and he always wrote in his  
 • own room.

Scarcely in the world could there be found a

deeper silence than round the house in the forest.

The six Samoan house servants were noble barbarians with dignity and grace of carriage, and had manners hardly to be surpassed. All were Roman Catholics. They were intelligent and eloquent. Among them, the boy "Sosimo" waited on Stevenson hand and foot and looked after his pony. The patriarchal stage of society prevailed in the islands (such as existed in Scotland before the rebellion of '45).

In Samoa, Stevenson was known as "Tusitala"—"the writer of tales". He was respected among the chiefs as a man of learning, and also it must be said, because he was a rich man. A number of the chiefs were his own friends, and loved him for his friendly company, and sympathy with them in their political troubles.

He was given the rank of a chieftain himself. For the rest, his influence was vastly exaggerated by rumour. It was said that he could have been king of the islands, if he wished; nothing irritated Stevenson more than to hear this, for there was not a shade of truth in it.

His own way of life at "Vailima" was very quiet,

and strictly arranged for concentration on his work. He would be up at six and begin writing; or often at dawn he had already begun. At half-past six "Sosimo" took him breakfast and he continued to work by himself chiefly making notes until his step-daughter, Mrs. Strong, who acted as his secretary was able to begin writing to his dictation, generally soon after eight; and together they worked till one o'clock. At that hour the whole household met at luncheon in the long hall. There were always guests, and for these the meal was rather ceremonious and festive; Stevenson himself generally full of good talk and full of the spirit of enjoyment. In the early evening he would play croquet or lawn tennis, or go for a long solitary ride. By eight o'clock in the evening everyone had dispersed; and Stevenson did most of his reading in the quiet of his own room; but as an invalid he was ordered to be in bed by 10 p.m., and by that time his strength had gone and he was ready for rest.

The day was arranged thus, but was subject to endless variations. If he were in a hot fit of work, he could do nothing and think of nothing else, and



toiled all day long, without appearing at meals. Then there were days when he was not well enough to work at all, and days when he wished for solitude and contemplation.

There was always a great variety of visitors coming and going at "Vailima".

In the four years of his life in Samoa eight British men-o'-war entered the harbour at different times; their officers were constant visitors, and soon became great friends. Then merchant officers of the mail steamers would come up the steep climb from Apia the capital—off New Zealand boats and San Francisco vessels. Again there were rough and ancient "traders" who had settled down in the South Seas, often with dusky brides; "Their mouths full of oaths, for which they punctiliously apologise." When these appeared they were always hailed with acclamation by Stevenson. When inquisitive reporters came they went away having gathered very little, and with a feeling that it was Stevenson who had interviewed *them*. They wrote much nonsense—exaggerated Stevenson's "chief-tainship" in Samoa, and the magnificence of his modest house. "Subpriorsford" Louis called "Vail-

ima" for fun, after the visit of one of these journalists. The latter, describing the author in some New York paper, had said, "A tall willowy column supported the classic head, from which proceeded a hacking cough."

Priests and Catholic sisters from the Catholic Mission often came, and also Church of England missionaries. "Those who have a taste for hearing missions, Protestant or Catholic, derided, must seek their pleasures somewhere else than in my pages," Stevenson wrote, "for whether Catholic or Protestant, with all their gross blots, with all their deficiency of candour, of humour, and of common sense, the missionaries are the best and the most useful whites in the Pacific."

Of one of them, a Mr. Clarke, he writes, "Clarke up here almost all day yesterday, a man I esteem and like to the soles of his boots; I prefer him to anyone in Samoa and to most people in the world; a real good missionary, with the inestimable advantage of having grown up a layman. Pity they can't all get that!" Then there were the failures of the islands, "the poor whites" and "the man left upon the beach", for whom he felt the deepest

sympathy, knowing with his compassionate imagination just what it felt like to be "hopeless".

Writing home to Sydney Colvin, Stevenson says at this time, "I am so absurdly well here in the tropics. And taking my life all through, look at it fore and back, and upside down, though I would very fain change myself, I would not change my circumstances, unless it were to bring you here. And yet God knows perhaps this intercourse of writing serves as well, and I wonder, were you here indeed, would I commune so continually with the thought of you? . . . As for my damned literature God knows what a business it is grinding along without a scrap of inspiration or a note of style."

He was engaged at the time on "St. Ives" which did not go well. "There is no philosophic pith under the yarn," he says, "It's a mere tissue of adventures." This book he did not finish; but the passionate loyalty with which his heart always warmed to Scotland to the last, now inspired him to create his eighteenth-century romance, "Weir of Hermiston". In this he now became happily engrossed.

His own verse describes his absorption:

"I saw rain falling and the rainbow drawn  
 On Lammermuir. Harkening I heard  
     In my precipitous city, beaten bells  
     Winnow the keen sea wind. And here, afar,  
 Intent on my own race and place, I wrote."

To Gosse, in 1893, he writes, "Your letter was to me such a bright spot that I answer it right away. *It is the history of kindness that alone makes this world tolerable.* If it were not for that, the effect of kind words, kind looks, kind letters, multiplying, spreading, making one happy through another, and bringing forth benefits, I should be tempted to think our life a practical jest in the worst possible taste."

Samoa with its fine climate had prolonged his life, but long life was not to be. October and November of the year 1894 passed; he remained to all appearances in his ordinary health; his creative faculties seemed at their very best, and the days were going by very quickly for him for he felt he was writing as well as ever he had done in his life; he was quite absorbed in his work and had all his powers concentrated on the "Weir of Hermiston". His birthday had been celebrated by giving a native feast on the verandah of Vailima.

At the end of November Mrs. Stevenson was anxious about her husband, and suffered from forebodings. He had had a few days of illness and began to think that when his work was finished, he had better "go away from Samoa for change"; unknown to him just then, however, the end was very near. It is best to give Lloyd Osbourne's account of Louis's last day on earth, for the stepson who loved his father with such deep devotion was himself on the spot at the time.

"Stevenson wrote hard all that morning of the last day, the 3rd December, at his half-finished book, 'Weir of Hermiston'. He judged it the best book he had ever written, and the sense of successful effort made him buoyant and happy as nothing else could. In the afternoon, the mail fell to be answered. At sunset he came downstairs; rallied his wife about the forebodings she had not been able to shake off that morning; talked of a lecturing tour to America that he was eager to take the voyage to New York to make, as he had not been so well lately; and played a game of picquet with her to drive away her melancholy. Then he said he was hungry; begged her to help him make a

salad for the evening meal, and brought up a bottle of old Burgundy from the cellar. He came back to the verandah, gaily talking and helping her with the little feast, when suddenly he put both hands to his head, and cried out, 'What's that?' Then he asked quickly, 'Do I look strange?' Even as he did so, he fell on his knees beside her. He was helped into the long hall, by his wife and Sosimo; collapsing instantly as he lay back in his armchair. Little time was lost in bringing the doctors—Anderson off a man-o'-war, and his friend, Dr. Funk. They looked at him and shook their heads.

"The dying man lay back in the chair, breathing hardly, his family about him frenzied with grief as he lost consciousness, and they realized all hope was past. After years of unsparing mental toil, a blood-vessel had burst in the brain. A dozen and more Samoans of the household sat in a wide semi-circle on the floor, their troubled faces all fixed upon their dying master. Mr. Clarke, from the Samoan Mission had now come, an old and valued friend; he knelt and prayed as the life ebbed away.

"It was Monday evening, the 3rd December, 1894 and Stevenson died at ten minutes past eight, in the

forty-fourth year of his age. He lay in the hall where he had passed some of the gayest and most delightful hours of his life. Sosimo and the other Roman Catholic servants asked that they might be allowed to recite the prayers of the dead, and till midnight solemn chants continued in commingled Latin and Samoan. Later a chief arrived with his retainers bringing a precious mat to wrap about the dead. 'Sleep, Tusitala,' he said, and knelt and ceremoniously kissed the hand. All the next morning Samoans were arriving with brilliant flowers, and the room glowed with the many colours. There were no strangers on that day, no acquaintances; those only were called in, who would deeply feel the loss."

Living always in the expectation of death coming to him at any time, Louis had told his wife to remember when his time should finally come, that it was as natural to die as to be born; to take his death simply. This she now tried to carry out.

It was a formidable ascent up the steep face of Mount Vaea to the wide ledge of rock just under the summit where (should he die in Samoa) Stevenson had told her he would like to be

buried. Mrs. Stevenson consulted with some of the chiefs who had come up to the house to perform the ceremony of kissing the hand of "Tusitala," who had passed away, and between them they sent forty Samoans to cut a winding path up the mountain, and to dig his grave on the heights.

The servants at Vailima then laid their master in a Samoan coffin of their own making; and slowly and with difficulty they made the long steep ascent with their burden to the summit of the mountain.

Stevenson's wife and her son climbed sorrowfully up to the burial place together; the ascent was also made by about twenty friends from the island.

Mr. Clarke read the burial service; and high up there at sunset all knelt about the grave in prayer, and thought with enthusiasm of the author of "Treasure Island" who had so passionately loved all the poetry of this earth; who in spite of much suffering had gratefully "rejoiced and been exceedingly glad", and whose message to others was, above all things, "to rejoice".

"In front of the grave lies the vast ocean and the surf-swept coral reef; to the right and left green



mountains rise, densely covered with the primæval forest."

A plain tomb in the Samoan fashion was later placed upon the grave, bearing the words in Samoan "The Tomb of Tusitala", and upon a panel, in English, is engraved the "Requiem" from his own poems, that Stevenson had written, when thirty, in California.

Under the wide and starry sky  
Dig the grave and let me lie.  
Glad did I live and gladly die  
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:  
"Here he lies where he longed to be;  
Home is the sailor, home from sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill."



## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

**F**ORTY-FIVE years ago a biography, "The Right Honble. Arthur MacMurrough Kavanagh, 1831-1889", was published by Messrs. Macmillan, written just after his death, by his cousin, Mrs. Sarah Steele. This old book is out of print, but a copy of it is to be found in the London Library, and I would like to pay a tribute to the deceased authoress of this Victorian work which gives an affectionate, and politically interesting account of Mr. Kavanagh's life.

To Sir Graham Balfour's life of Robert Louis Stevenson, I am indebted for information, and I am grateful to Mr. Lloyd Osbourne for permission to quote Robert Louis Stevenson's poem "Requiem."

For the life of both the Lambs, Mr. E. V. Lucas is, of course, always the right authority to turn to.

Beethoven's music has been best interpreted in this country by Sir Donald Francis Tovey. Sir George Grove's "Beethoven and his Nine Symphonies" is of great practical literary use.

## HANDICAPS

The best account of Henry Fawcett is to be found in Sir Leslie Stephen's biography of the Professor, published in 1885.

The works of the authors I have mentioned I have used gratefully for a study of the characters that (from the aspect of infirmity alone) are but briefly depicted here.

MARY MACCARTHY.





HV1947

F

MacCarthy, Mrs. Mary

Handicaps: six studies,

Date Due

HV1947

F

AUTHOR

(Henry Francis)

MacCarthy, Mrs. Mary

TITLE

Handicaps; six studies,

DATE DUE

BORROWER'S NAME

12

~~1-5-88~~

~~Helen McDermott~~

~~10-6-4~~

~~49 E. 12 St. NYC~~

~~0106-4~~

~~(212) 687-6997~~

